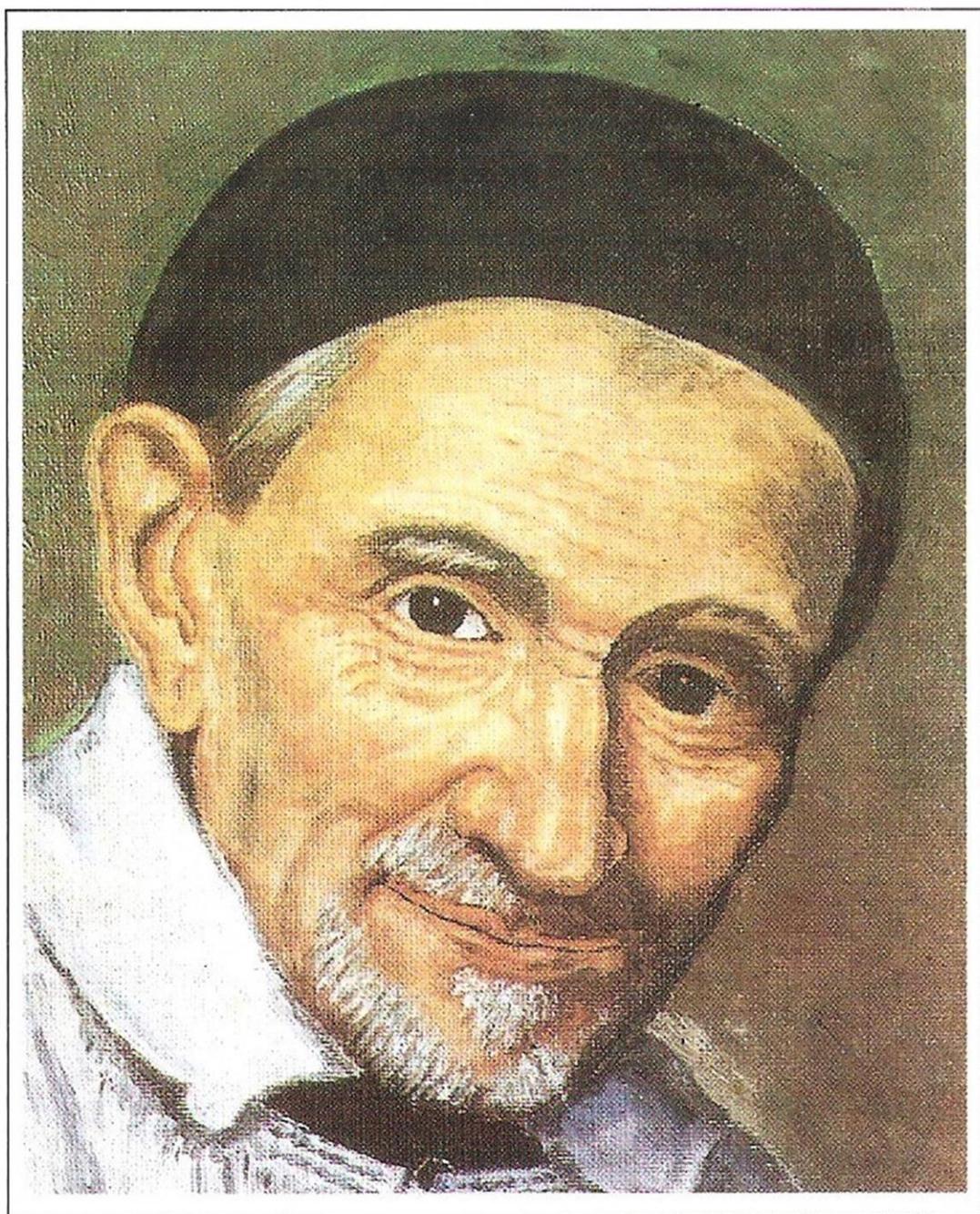


# VINCENTIANA

45<sup>th</sup> YEAR - N. 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2001



*“The Bishop,  
Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
for the Hope of the World”*

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

GENERAL CURIA

## Holy See

### Appointment

The **Superior General** received a letter (11 June) from Cardinal Sodano, the Secretary of State, informing him that the Holy Father has named him a *member of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life*.

(Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 29, 2001, p. 1)

### Synod of Bishops

The Holy See has invited the **Superior General** to take part as an *auditor* in the upcoming Synod of Bishops which has as its theme “The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World.” The Synod will be held in Rome from September 30 to October 27.

(Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, September 17-18, 2001, p. 4)

On October 9, the **Superior General**, taking inspiration from St. Vincent, spoke to the bishops present at the Synod, inviting them to be fathers and brothers to the poor and to the priests.

(Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 8-9, 2001, p. 4)

### Causes of the Saints

On 24 April 2001, in the presence of the Holy Father, the **Decree on the Heroicity of the Virtues of the Servant of God Sr. Rosalie Rendu** was promulgated. This Daughter of Charity was born on 9 September 1786 in Confort (France) and died on 7 February 1856 in Paris.

(*L'Osservatore Romano*, April 25, 2001, p. 1)

(vedere fotocopia del'Osservatore Romano)

El 20 de diciembre de 2001, en presencia del Santo Padre, fue promulgado el **Decreto** relacionado con un *milagro* atribuido a la intercesión del **Venerable Siervo de Dios Marco Antonio Durando**, Sacerdote de la Congregación de la Misión, Fundador de la Congregación de las Hermanas de Jesús Nazareno, nacido el 22 de mayo de 1801 en Mondoví (Italia) y muerto el 10 de diciembre de 1880 en Turín (Italia).

(*L'Osservatore Romano*, December 21, 2001, p. 1)

Rome, July 1, 2001

*To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

As I mentioned during our meeting in Dublin, I am enacting, in accord with Article 107, 2°, and with the unanimous consent of the members of the General Council, a general ordinance applicable in all of the provinces of the Congregation.

The ordinance reads as follows:

**In each province of the Congregation of the Mission a finance committee will be established. It shall be presided over by the provincial superior or his delegate. It shall be composed of the provincial treasurer and at least three other members, knowledgeable in financial matters and the related portions of civil law, some of whom may be lay persons. It shall have an advisory role, offering recommendations to the provincial and the members of his council. The members of the finance committee shall be appointed by the provincial for a three-year term, which is renewable.**

The enclosed document, which I hope you will find useful, sets the ordinance in a broader context; namely, the proper administration of the temporal goods of the Congregation, which are the “patrimony of the poor” (C. 148 § 1) and the need for great transparency in rendering accounts of the receipts and expenditures of our houses, provinces, and the Congregation as a whole, as well as about the status of our patrimony.

I ask you to examine this document carefully with the members of your council and, if you have not already done so, to establish a finance committee by January 1, 2002.

During the next General Assembly, we will have the opportunity to evaluate the functioning of such committees. With all of the members of the General Council, I hope that they will be of great help to the provinces in administering our goods well and in avoiding some of the serious problems which have arisen in recent years.

Your brother in St. Vincent,  
Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

## **Some Norms for the Financial Administration Of the Provinces of the Congregation of the Mission**

Our Constitutions (Articles 148-155) and Statutes (Articles 75-77 and 100-107) speak at length about the administration of the goods of the Congregation. The *Practical Guide for the Visitor* also speaks about this matter in considerable detail (§§ 240-247 and 309).

1. Our norms call us to great transparency in rendering accounts of the receipts and expenditures of our houses, provinces, and the Congregation as a whole, as well as about the status of our patrimony. In this light, for the future well-being of the Congregation and also, unfortunately, because abuses have arisen, I would like to call to mind the following norms of the Congregation:

1.1. The treasurers of the local houses are to present an account of the receipts and expenditures of the houses, as well as a report on the status of the houses' patrimony, once a month to the local superior. A signature of approval is to be affixed to the account, provided that it is found to be accurate (Statute 103 § 2).

1.2. The provincial treasurer is to present an account of the receipts and expenditures of the province, as well as a report on the status of the province's patrimony, twice a year to the provincial with his council. A signature of approval is to be affixed to the account, provided that it is found to be accurate (Statute 103 § 2).

1.3. Members entrusted with the administration of special works of either a province or a house shall submit an account of the receipts and expenditures to their respective superiors at the time and in the manner determined by provincial norms (Statute 103 § 3).

2. In order to foster the proper administration of temporal goods and to obtain broader financial advice, Canon 1280 requires that every juridic person have a finance council.<sup>1</sup>

2.1 In this spirit, with the consent of the members of the General Council, in accord with Article 107, 2° of our Constitutions, I am establishing a general ordinance applicable to all of the provinces of the Congregation of the Mission. It is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>**Canon 1280:** *Each juridic person is to have its own finance council or at least two advisors, who according to the norm of its statutes assist the administrator in carrying out his or her function. Cf. also: Canon 492 § 1: In each diocese a finance council is to be established by the bishop, over which he himself or his delegate presides, and which is to be composed of at least three members of the Christian faithful truly skilled in financial affairs as well as in the civil law, of outstanding integrity and appointed by the bishop.*

§ 2: *Members of the finance council are to be named for a five year term; but having completed this term they may be named to other five year terms.*

§ 3: *Those persons are excluded from the finance council who are related to the bishop up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity. Cf. also: Canon 493: In addition to the duties committed to it in Book V: "The Temporal Goods of the Church," the finance council is to prepare each year according to the directions of the diocesan bishop a budget of the income and expenditures foreseen for the governance of the entire diocese in the coming year; moreover at the close of the year it is to examine a report of receipts and expenditures.*

**In each province of the Congregation of the Mission a finance committee will be established. It shall be presided over by the provincial superior or his delegate. It shall be composed of the provincial treasurer and at least three other members, knowledgeable in financial matters and the related portions of civil law, some of whom may be lay persons. It shall have an advisory role, offering recommendations to the provincial and the members of his council. The members of the finance committee shall be appointed by the provincial for a three-year term, which is renewable.**

I ask that this ordinance be put into practice within six months from the date of this document; that is, by January 1, 2002.

2.2 Among the competencies of this committee shall be the following:

2.2.1 It shall prepare annually a budget of the income and expenditures of the province for the coming year.

2.2.2 At the end of each fiscal year, it shall review and present for the approval of the provincial superior the account which the provincial treasurer has prepared of the province's receipts and expenditures, as well as the report on the status of the patrimony of the province, making appropriate recommendations to the provincial superior and provincial treasurer in this regard.

2.2.3 It shall supervise the conservation, growth and administration of the patrimony of the province and make appropriate recommendations to the provincial superior and the provincial treasurer in this regard.

2.2.4 It shall serve as a consultative body to the provincial superior and provincial treasurer in relation to significant economic questions concerning investments, expenditures, and the conservation and disposal of the patrimony of the province.

2.2.5 It will serve, when asked, as a consultative body to the provincial superior and the provincial treasurer in relationship to any other economic matters that they might propose to the committee.

Some provinces already have norms concerning the matters described above. Such norms remain in effect, unless they are contrary to what is prescribed above. If necessary, such norms should be revised to include the points contained in this document.

3. It is recommended that, in each province at least one confrere, perhaps someone pertaining to the finance committee, be instructed by the provincial treasurer about the working of the treasurer's office, so that in the case of the absence, sickness, or sudden death of a treasurer someone would be capable of taking over the running of the office.

To assist finance councils already established or to be established in the provinces, I offer the attached sample guidelines, which are intended as illustrative and not normative.

## **Sample Guidelines for the Finance Committees Of the Congregation of the Mission**

**Mission:** The Finance Committee shall assist the Provincial Treasurer in advising the Provincial Superior and his council in financial matters. The purpose of the Finance Committee is to promote the prudent management of the financial resources of the province always keeping in mind its mission to the poor and the well being of the confreres. The Committee researches and proposes policy on issues, as requested by the Provincial Superior or the Provincial Treasurer.

**Appointment:** The Members of the Finance Committee are proposed by the Provincial Treasurer and appointed by the Provincial Superior with his council. Members are appointed for a three-year term renewable only twice, unless for a serious reason and upon the recommendation of the Provincial Treasurer, the Provincial Superior with his council should judge a further extension to be opportune.

**Composition:** The Finance Committee is composed of no less than five members, some of whom might be lay persons. The members should be selected so that the Committee manifests financial, legal, real estate, and planning skills, as well as Vincentian and religious values.

**Duties:** The duties of the Finance Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To assist the Provincial Treasurer in
  - establishing an annual budget for the province;
  - developing financial strategies for supporting the province's future plans;
  - monitoring the purchase, the obtaining of proper legal titles, the alienation, renovation, construction, or management of property owned by the houses of the province or the province itself;
  - creating the year-end report of receipts and expenditures of the province;
  - reviewing investment management;
  - interpreting the annual audit;
  - studying house budgets and assisting houses in their financial management when asked by the Provincial Treasurer;
  - other areas as assigned.
  
- To seek the advice of consultants as necessary.

**Procedures:** The Provincial Superior convenes meetings at least twice a year and, with the Provincial Treasurer, establishes the agenda for the Finance Committee. The Provincial Superior serves as its chairperson. He also invites consultants or observers to attend meetings as appropriate.

The Committee shall elect a secretary who will keep all records and all documents of the Committee. Minutes of each meeting will be recorded and distributed to the members at least one week prior to the Committee's next meeting. These minutes, including the policies,

documents, and actions of the Committee will be incorporated by the Provincial Treasurer in his reports and recommendations to the Provincial Superior and his council.

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
July 1, 2001  
Rome, Italy

Rome, July 10, 2001

Dear brothers and sisters, members of the Vincentian Family,

May the grace and peace of God, Our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Each year, about this time, we write to ask all the members of our Vincentian Family to begin to prepare for the day of common prayer that we celebrate around September 27. This year our day of prayer will be quite special.

During a meeting held last February in Paris in which the heads of many of the principal branches of our Family participated, we decided, for the first time in our history, to invite all our branches to focus on a common theme for the next two years: "The Globalization of Charity: The Struggle Against Hunger." With the help of a committee composed of members of the various branches, we have prepared a PowerPoint presentation, in various languages, which explains the project that we are undertaking together as members of the Vincentian Family and suggests various strategies for combatting hunger. I am enclosing a written version of the PowerPoint presentation, which can be distributed to the members of our Family and used as the basis for discussion and for formulating concrete projects in the diverse cultural situations where we live and serve.

This campaign against hunger will be our common focus over the next two years, beginning on September 27, 2001 and lasting until September 27, 2003. Over the course of that time, the committee mentioned above will help all of us in evaluating periodically what the results of the campaign against hunger are and in sharing experiences about the projects that the various branches are undertaking.

We could say much more about this common focus, but the enclosed materials explain it rather fully. The PowerPoint presentation can be downloaded from our site

([www.famvin.org](http://www.famvin.org)). It is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian.

Of course, as in recent years, we urge all of the members of our Family, in all of the different countries, to come together around September 27, 2001, for our annual day of prayer. In order to facilitate this, we are attaching a page of guidelines for organizing the day.

As you can see, this year's day of prayer is a unique occasion, since we will be launching the campaign against hunger together, while asking the Lord to deepen the roots of his kingdom among us. With you, we thank the Lord for the gifts he has given our Family and pray that he will continue to strengthen us in our commitment to stand at the side of the poor and to offer ourselves to him as their servants.

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Patricia Palacios de Nava  
President , AIC (founded in 1617)

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Yvon Laroche, rsv  
Superior General, Religious of  
St. Vincent de Paul (founded in 1845)

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Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General, Congregation of the  
Mission (founded in 1625)

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Gladys Abi-Saïd  
President, Vincentian  
Marian Youth (founded in 1847)

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Sr. Juana Elizondo, D.C.  
Superior General, Daughters of  
Charity (founded in 1633)

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Charles Shelby, C.M.  
Miraculous Medal Association  
(founded in 1905)

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José Ramón Díaz Torremocha  
President, St. Vincent de Paul  
Society (founded in 1833)

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Eva Villar  
President, MISEVI  
(founded in 1999)

## **“The Globalization of Charity: The Fight against Hunger”**

**Vincentian Family [www.famvin.org](http://www.famvin.org)**

27 sept. 2001 - 27 sept. 2003

### **Introduction**

We, the leaders of some of the branches of the Vincentian Family, during our meeting in Paris, at the dawn of the new millennium, chose **hunger** as our common focus for the next two years. From September 27, 2001 until September 27, 2003, we propose to channel the energies of our various branches to fight this disaster. Our common motto during this two-year period will be:

**“The Globalization of Charity: The Fight against Hunger”**

### **1. Context of the Reality**

Almost 800 million people, about one-sixth of the population of the world's developing nations, suffer from malnutrition. Of this, 200 million are children. (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

Around 24,000 people die daily from hunger or hunger-related causes, 75% of whom are children under the age of five. (The Hunger Project, United Nations). At present, 10% of the children in developing countries die before the age of five. (CARE).

Aside from death, chronic malnutrition also causes impaired vision, listlessness, stunted growth and increased susceptibility to diseases. Persons who suffer severe malnutrition are unable to function at even a basic level. (World Food Program, United Nations).

In the last fifty years, almost 400 million people around the world have died of hunger and poor sanitary conditions. This is three times the number of people killed in all the wars fought in the entire 20th century. (BFWI).

The problem lies in food distribution, not in its production. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has fixed the minimum daily intake requirement per person at 2,350 calories. Worldwide, there are 2,720 calories available per person per day. More than 50 countries fall below that requirement. They do not produce enough food to feed their population nor can they afford the importation of the necessary products to fill the gap. The majority of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Often, it takes only a few simple resources for impoverished people to be able to cultivate enough food to become self-sufficient. These resources include quality

seeds, appropriate tools and access to water. Small improvements in farming techniques and food storage methods are also helpful. (Oxfam).

## **2. Spirituality**

Dear sons and daughters of St. Vincent, search out more than ever, with boldness, humility and skill, the causes of poverty and encourage short and long-term solutions, adaptable and effective concrete solutions. By doing so you will work for the credibility of the Gospel and of the Church. (Pope John Paul II during the CM General Assembly, 1986) \*

## **3. Types of Intervention**

### **3.1 Provide food immediately**

Hunger is one of those problems that demand an immediate response, as St. Vincent often demonstrated in practice. When there is no response, people die. Later on, we will suggest some projects that offer an immediate response to hunger.

#### **3.1.1 Breakfast for school children**

In many countries, children go to school without having eaten any breakfast. Malnutrition severely impedes their attention span and learning capacity. In many countries throughout the world, members of the Vincentian Family sponsor breakfast programs in schools.

#### **3.1.2 Soup Kitchens**

Many parishes or pastoral centers offer meals to those who are hungry, at midday or in the evening. Occasionally, those meals are served in a way that shows great respect for the dignity of the poor. They are seated at table and provided with a well-balanced meal served in a warm and friendly manner.

#### **3.1.3 Feeding program for pregnant mothers**

In our missions, as well as in our parishes, we can implement programs that support projects for malnourished pregnant women, helping them cope with their situation by offering them and their child better conditions.

#### **3.1.4 “Bread for the poor”**

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\* *Vincentiana* XXX (1986), p. 417.

One branch of the Vincentian Family, at the local or national level, sets aside the weekly cost of bread during a period of time (e.g. one month). This amount is collected by each association and deposited in a special account for the campaign against hunger. This project can be done in parishes, schools, etc.

### **3.1.5 Attention to prisoners who die of hunger and sickness**

The Bishops of Africa have made a call to Religious to give special attention to those who are detained. By obtaining the necessary permission from the authorities and visiting the prisoners, we can detect their basic nutritional and medical needs, establishing links with their families and giving them hope. Monetary donations for this end are solicited in those countries where the Vincentian Family is present.

### **3.1.6 “The shared pot”**

A stew is prepared in a big pot and different persons in the community contribute vegetables, legumes, meat and other food. This is distributed to the most needy persons in the community (housewives, children, elderly, sick persons). This project can be done in communities, districts and day care centers, either in rural or urban areas.

### **3.1.7 “Loose change”**

This project can be done in a store or chain of supermarkets where buyers donate their loose change. Food is then purchased with the money collected for those who suffer hunger.

### **3.1.8 “Brotherhood”**

Associations or local groups of the Vincentian Family send a reasonable amount to different mothers of families to help in their expenses. This will enable them to buy a little bit more food, with the condition that they should feed another person poorer than themselves. This project is mutually beneficial.

### **3.1.9 “Keep some for others”**

Keep in the pantry some food to be shared weekly or monthly with other families or persons who are poor. This food can be given to specific persons or groups.

## **3.2 Attack the causes**

This is a more difficult task, but in the long run more effective. This problem of hunger can be eradicated. Though 24,000 people die every day of hunger or hunger-related causes, this number is down from ten years ago, when there were 35,000 victims daily, and that of twenty years ago when there were 41,000 daily. Many experts on hunger believe that, ultimately, the best way to reduce it is through education. Later on, we will suggest some lines of action directed toward attacking the causes of hunger.

### **3.2.1 Basic education**

Basic education is probably one of the most important instruments for breaking out of the cycle of poverty. In 1998, in developing nations, about 130 million eligible children out of a total of 625 million did not attend primary school. Of this, 73 million were girls. (UNICEF)

Small projects aimed at teaching and putting into practice basic agricultural methods, basic irrigation, raising animals for food consumption and establishment of fish farms are proposed.

### **3.2.2 Cooperatives**

Cooperative or community stores in which the poor can sell, exchange, and barter their products, or purchase basic commodities at more affordable prices.

### **3.2.3 Awareness & participation**

Instill in institutions and civil society in general, through means of communication, an awareness of the possibilities of solidarity with the social classes or under-developed countries. This can be accomplished by proposing other structures or laws that will provide funding for food programs.

### **3.2.4 Set up a Food Bank**

Set up a food bank based on a network of agencies working together in the delivery, acceptance, control, administration and distribution of perishable items that have been donated and are in good condition. This may be done in places where there are food suppliers or producers.

### **3.2.5 Investigation on the use of surplus food**

With the support of agencies and universities, have a team look into the use of surplus food on the local, regional and national levels. In order to publicize such investigation and the concrete proposals on food distribution, it is advisable to hold awareness campaigns through participative forums or by proposing concrete action to denounce and rectify these situations.

### **3.2.6 “ A day (weekly or monthly) against hunger”**

In each country or region the VF will organize an awareness campaign for the community or a period of effective solidarity supporting the fight against hunger. To achieve this objective, researches are to be organized and publicized in pamphlets, forums, and conferences. Practical educational programs may be proposed, as well as assistance in cultivation, collection and distribution of food, etc.

### **3.2.7 Work hand-in-hand with public authorities**

The Vincentian Family in each country seeks to be in solidarity with the actions and programs of the Church, NGOs and the government. Suggestions on how to implement the campaign against hunger will be proposed, whereby effective means of intervention, community awareness and offering education are established.

## **4. Publicity Strategies**

For the diffusion of this project, we propose to define the “what” and “how” of communication:

4.1 Develop an outline for the implementation of communication strategies to create awareness and inform the society in general about this project. (For example, write interesting articles about the project in each of the news bulletins of the different branches of the Vincentian Family).

4.2 In the same manner, efforts should be made to assure the continuity of the projects in the society at least for the next two years.

4.3 Emphasis must be given to the promotion of the logo agreed upon in order to facilitate unity and distinctness worldwide.

4.4 Use a common motto for all the branches and publicize it in all means of communication (radio, press, television, web page), as well as in the different Associations' alternative means of communication (news bulletins, posters, news videos, announcements, e-mail, reports, conferences, workshops, campaigns, etc.)

**Motto: “The Globalization of Charity: The Fight against Hunger”**

4.5 Dedicate a time for detailed reflection on the hunger problem during the meetings, seminars and encounters of the officers of the Vincentian Family on the national or international level. Offer information, statistical data, and invite the participation of experts who will give testimonies and relate experiences of the projects. It is recommended to point out that globalizing the fight against hunger could very well help solve other problems. It would not be wise to merely consider hunger as an unavoidable disaster affecting a great part of humanity.

4.6 An active and frequent contact with the various agencies worldwide that investigate the problem of hunger, sharing with them our experience and receiving information in regards to efforts made to solve this problem.

4.7 Review the project every trimester, through the Internet or other means, and eventually make the necessary changes to it.

## **5. Program Planning**

Launch the campaign on September 27, 2001 to end on September 27, 2003.

Six months into the campaign, ask for feedback and sharing on the projects that are being implemented.

After one year, ask the national councils to send to the commission\* the projects that have already been done or are currently being done, in order to share them with others. It is requested that this be sent in a way that it can be published on the web page.

The Coordinating Council of the Vincentian Family on the national level is asked to reflect and study the causes of poverty and the possible projects that each branch can undertake or perhaps, a common project for all.

Encourage that the work be done in the form of “projects”.

## **6. Evaluation**

In order to evaluate the projects, it is proposed that, from the beginning, indicators that will help give an idea on the dimensions of the project and the results obtained be fixed. Thus, by uniting all the small initiatives we will become a major force with great social impact. (The indicators could be, for example: 1 - type of person: elderly, children, pregnant women, prisoners; 2 - number of persons who went to the soup kitchens; 3 - number of meals served; 4 - money collected and products purchased, the various products that were produced in a particular period of time; etc.)

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\* Any Rodríguez (AIC – Mexico) – Coordinator of the Commission for the Project of the Fight Against Hunger: [rany@att.net.mx](mailto:rany@att.net.mx) ; P. Benjamín Romo, C.M. – Delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family: [famvin@tin.it](mailto:famvin@tin.it)

An annual evaluation form will be sent to each country where the Vincentian Family is present, so that we might be able to determine how the programs were realized and assess if they have been effective on the short and long-term.

## **7. Information in the Web**

- Vincentian Family: [www.famvin.org](http://www.famvin.org)
- Bread for the Word: [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)
- Center on hunger and poverty: [www.centeronhunger.org](http://www.centeronhunger.org)
- Coalition on Human need: [www.chn.org](http://www.chn.org)
- The hunger site: [www.thehungersite.com](http://www.thehungersite.com)
- Community Food Security Coalition: [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)
- Congressional Hunger Center: [www.hungercenter.org](http://www.hungercenter.org)
- Education Concerns for Hunger Organization: [www.echonet.org](http://www.echonet.org)
- Food First: [www.foodfirst.org](http://www.foodfirst.org)
- Food for the Hungry: [www.fh.org](http://www.fh.org)
- Food Reseach and Action Center (FRAC): [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)
- Freedom from hunger: [www.freefromhunger.org](http://www.freefromhunger.org)
- The Hunger Project: [www.thp.org](http://www.thp.org)
- Mazon: [www.shamash.org/socaction/mazon](http://www.shamash.org/socaction/mazon)
- Oxfam America: [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)
- World Hunger Year: [www.worldhungeryear.org](http://www.worldhungeryear.org)

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 350<sup>th</sup> 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.

November 22, 2001

*To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

I write today, with considerable enthusiasm, to give you some news about the first International Meeting of the Association of the Miraculous Medal, held here in Rome on October 22-26, 2001. For your information, I am enclosing a copy of the Final Document.

As you can see from this document, the participants made a number of commitments at the end of the meeting as they looked toward the future. They also made five proposals to me, as Director General. In the months ahead, I will try to act on these.

Sixty-eight Vincentians, Daughters of Charity, and lay men and women took part, coming from 28 countries. Each day they listened to presentations, worked in discussion groups, and formulated proposals for promoting the life and works of the Association. I was very glad to be there myself to celebrate the opening and closing Masses, and to give a conference as well. I regret that my participation in the Synod kept me from being with the group full-time, as I had originally planned. Happily, we were able to get very good tickets for the closing Mass of the Synod. The members of the Association had seats right behind the concelebrating bishops, very close to the main altar in St. Peter's and to the Holy Father.

The commitments which the participants made focus on deepening the spirituality of the members of the Association in imitation of Mary the Mother of Jesus, on forming the members better, on motivating them to respond concretely and effectively to the needs of the poor, on disseminating the Miraculous Medal and extending the Association in the many countries where the Vincentian Family exists, on collaborating with the other branches of the Family, and on formulating National Statutes in the countries to which the Association is spreading. I ask your help in assisting the members of the Association to meet these goals.

St. Vincent encouraged us to have a deep devotion to Mary, the Mother of the Church and Mother of the Poor. He says that: “She, better than anyone else, penetrated the substance (of the gospel) and put it into practice.” With you, I pray that Mary, who is our mother too, will bless the Vincentian Family.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

*A New Image for a New Millennium*  
*Final Document*

**First International Encounter of  
the Association of the Miraculous Medal**

**Rome, October 22-26, 2001**

*To all the members of the Association of the Miraculous Medal*

Invited by Father Robert Maloney, C.M., Director General of the Association of the Miraculous Medal, and representing 28 countries, we 70 members of the International Vincentian Family (laity, Daughters of Charity, and Missionaries) gathered in Rome. Our purpose was: *“to reflect on the reality and identity of the Association of the Miraculous Medal in the world, and to commit to some common approaches even as we embark on new roads.”* Our motto was: *“A New Image for a New Millennium.”*

**1. Identity of the Association**

- The Association of the Miraculous Medal (AMM) began soon after the appearances of the Virgin Mary to Saint Catherine Labouré in 1830. Later, in 1909, its Statutes were approved and confirmed officially by Pope Pius X.
- It is an ecclesial, Marian, and Vincentian Association;
- It is a living and enduring reminder of the Immaculate Virgin Mary's apparition in 1830 (Statutes 1);
- It has the purposes of: *“recalling Mary conceived without sin; and also the sanctification of its members, integral formation in the Christian life, and the apostolate of charity, especially toward the most abandoned. Mary's Holy Medal, both by the symbolism which it shows and by the power it enjoys, offers both a model and assistance for those purposes.”* (Statutes 2)
- The members of the AMM very frequently repeat the words that appear on the Medal (Cf. Statutes 8). They keep in mind that true devotion consists neither in fruitless and passing emotion, nor in a certain vain credulity. On the contrary, it proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God and are moved to love her as her children and to imitate her virtues. (Cf. Statutes 8; *Lumen Gentium* 67)

**2. Reality of the AMM in the world**

Millions of people that wear the Miraculous Medal form the Association, which is made up of general members and particular members. The AMM is present in more than 30 countries, of which 7 have received approval of

particular statutes from the Director General. In the last few years the AMM has experienced a quick growth and expansion. A significant diversity exists in the organization and apostolate of the AMM in the different countries where it is present.

The work and experience that we shared as participants in this Encounter have led us to the **convictions, commitments, and proposals** we offer here, with the intention that they serve as a basis for the creation and strengthening of the Association in each country. We are confident that they will contribute to a stronger unity of the AMM and to creating a new Image of the AMM in the New Millennium.

### **3. Convictions and Commitments**

#### **3.1. Spirituality**

##### **A. Convictions**

1. Jesus is the center of our life;
2. The Holy Spirit enables us to live in relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters;
3. Mary, our mother, leads us to Christ and is a teacher of the spiritual life;
4. The Word of God is the starting point in our Marian reflection;
5. The liturgy, especially the Eucharist, is the summit and source of the Christian life (Cf. *Sacrum Concilium* [SC] 10);
6. Our age requires Christians of deep faith and intense prayer life;
7. Faith is born, lives, is shared, and is celebrated in community;
8. Affective love of God is closely connected to effective service of the poor.

##### **B. Commitments**

1. To pray with Mary and to pray like Mary;
2. To live, following the example of Mary, like true disciples, listening to the Word of God and docile to the Spirit;
3. To make our centers “schools of prayer for those who know the experience of God” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* [NMI] 33);
4. To live like Mary, in true solidarity with the poor;
5. To practice meditation and silence;
6. To be joyful witnesses of deep faith.

#### **3.2. Formation**

##### **A. Convictions**

1. Formation is the greatest challenge that the AMM faces today;
2. Formation involves a continuous process of development;
3. Formation is vital to strengthen the identity and image of the Association;

4. Formation is a responsibility of the whole group and of each member in the Association;
5. Formation is nurtured by prayer and the Word of God;
6. The knowledge of Mary's mission in the history of salvation sheds light on Christian life and apostolic commitment;
7. Formation is necessary for competent and effective service.

### **B. Commitments**

1. To promote a formation that enables our own growth and the growth of others;
2. To offer the members of the Association a basic human and Christian education;
3. To work for an integral formation that feeds the ecclesial, Marian and Vincentian dimension of the Association;
4. To promote knowledge of the social teachings of the Church and to apply them in our pastoral projects;
5. To enhance the formation of lay leaders so that these in turn may form and lead others in the Association;
6. To demonstrate good stewardship of the Association's funds, giving priority to formation of members and the needs of the poor.

## **3.3. Apostolate and mission**

### **A. Convictions**

1. Mary inspires our commitment to the poor;
2. The AMM is a privileged place where lay people of all ages can live their vocation;
3. Growth in sanctity determines apostolic success: "a person of prayer will be capable of everything" (SV XI, 83);
4. This is the age of the laity in the Church and the world;
5. Christian charity today calls for "even greater resourcefulness ... a new creativity" (NMI 50): "love is inventive unto infinity" (SV XI, 146 / ES XI, 65);
6. The AMM is an instrument of good news and of hope for our world;
7. The monthly "Home Visit" of the small Miraculous Medal shrine is an effective way to evangelize the family.

### **B. Commitments**

1. Like Mary, to be an evangelizing presence wherever we are;
2. To practice listening to the Lord and to the poor;
3. To give preference to working with families, so that each family becomes a "domestic church";
4. To participate actively in the life and apostolate of local Churches;

5. To encourage members of the Association to respond to the needs of the poor “at the same speed that one would run to put out a fire” (SV XI, 31 / ES XI, 724);
6. To adopt a lifestyle such “that the poor feel at home” among us (NMI 50);
7. To take on among the poor a respectful, kind, and meaningful presence that elevates their dignity and promotes their human and Christian condition;
8. To testify with words and works to our union with Christ.

### **3.4. Dissemination and devotion**

#### **A. Convictions**

1. Mary is the center and source of the AMM;
2. The Miraculous Medal is a loving sign of the care and Providence of God;
3. The Medal brings a message of salvation to the world and has the power to evangelize;
4. Authentic devotion to Mary consists in the imitation of her virtues;
5. Mary helps us to build a Christian community of brothers and sisters.

#### **B. Commitments**

1. To disseminate the Miraculous Medal as Mary requested of Saint Catherine Labouré;
2. To deeply appreciate the rich symbolic content of the Miraculous Medal;
3. To make a “re-reading” of the Miraculous Medal from the perspective of the poor;
4. To extend the AMM into countries where the Vincentian Family is active;
5. To take advantage of the Web pages of the Vincentian Family and of the AMM for disseminating the Association and spreading devotion to the Miraculous Medal;
6. To be creative in the search of funds for the different purposes of the Association.

### **3.5. Vincentian Family**

#### **A. Convictions**

1. The Miraculous Medal is related to each one of the branches of the Vincentian Family;
2. The Vincentian charism enriches the AMM.

#### **B. Commitments**

1. To grow in our sense of community and ownership of the Association;
2. To understand the other branches of the Vincentian Family and to appreciate the wealth in their diversity;
3. To collaborate with the Vincentian Family in evangelization and common projects for the service of the poor.

### **3.6. Advisors and accompaniment**

#### **A. Convictions**

1. The ministry of an adviser in the AMM is to care for the spirit and the purposes of the Association, to promote formation, to encourage caring relationships, to maintain an attitude of listening, and to facilitate dialogue and discernment;
2. An authentic advisor of the groups of the AMM serves as a companion both to the members and to the group, promoting growth, dynamism, and creativity;
3. The good adviser will always be a humble and simple servant.

#### **B. Commitments**

1. To encourage and support the development of pastoral projects that respond to the needs of the Association and situation in each country;
2. To assure the planning, completion, and evaluation of projects;
3. To enliven and accompany members and groups;
4. To serve in an advisory role that is liberating, one that avoids paternalistic and authoritarian attitudes;
5. To assist in developing national statutes.

### **4. Proposals for the Director General**

1. To create an organized international structure for the Association;
2. To revise the International Statutes, based on the new reflection and analysis that we have made during these days of Encounter;
3. To elaborate some general guidelines for formation in the AMM and to offer supporting material for newly created groups;
4. To convene a new International Encounter or General Assembly for the Association in the next 4 years;
5. To create an international bulletin of formation and information.

***O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you!***

Advent 2001

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission throughout the world*

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

Even before the tragic events of September 11, I had thought about making peace the theme of this year's Advent letter. Now, after the hijacking of four airplanes, the brutal killing of more than 6000 innocent people, the collapse of the Twin Towers, the destruction of a large portion of the Pentagon, and the crash of a final plane near Pittsburgh as its passengers struggled with terrorists — events witnessed on television by people throughout the world — the theme of peace imposes itself. Somehow, as I write, I fear that reflections on peace may sound hollow this year, that the angels' song may seem only a dream, almost an idyllic fairytale. So many conflicting emotions fill our hearts. In the face of such terrible violence, we instinctively feel compelled to protect the innocent, even with force, and to assure that lives will not be so senselessly destroyed in the future. An innate human longing for justice urges us to find and punish those who plotted to take human life so callously or helped others to do so. Confronted with what so many describe as “unthinkable” and “incomprehensible,” we yearn for a restored sense of security.

What is the correct politico-military response to terrorist attacks? As a professor (in a former life!), I used to teach a course on peace and war, describing the profound, but varied Christian tradition that has grown up over 2000 years concerning this theme. The voices in the tradition are many. It includes eloquent, non-violent spokespersons like Justin the Martyr, Cyprian of Carthage, Martin of Tours (a former soldier), and in modern times Pope Paul VI, Thomas Merton, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day. The tradition also includes articulate just war proponents, among whom stand some of the most eminent theologians in history, like Augustine and Aquinas. The question that keeps popping into my mind in these days, and that I ask others too, is: “What would **you** do if you were the decision-maker who had to formulate an effective response to terrorism right now?” I do not profess to know the answer to that question, but I ask the Lord to give wisdom to world leaders, and to us, that we might choose paths that respect innocent human life, even though much innocent human life was brutally destroyed on September 11.

In Luke's gospel, as they announce the coming of the Lord, the angels' prayer is peace (2:14). Peace ranks near the top of the list of New Testament

blessings: “Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:2; 1 Tm 1:2; 2 Tm 1:2; Ti 1:4; Phlm 1:3). One of the most significant biblical texts on this theme identifies Jesus himself as our peace: “But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, he who made both one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity” (Eph: 2:13-14). Jesus comes to create communion, to reconcile opposites. Paul writes of Jesus’ wall-breaking role again and again. He tells the Galatians (3:28): “There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus.” He repeats the theme in similar words to the Romans (10:12), the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:13) and to the Colossians (3:11).

Peace, Jesus assures us, is his gift to us (Jn 14:27). Peace is the constant greeting of the Risen Lord (Mt 28:9; Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19, 21). Peace is one of the first fruits of the coming of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). The early Christian community rejoiced in this gift, but it was also convinced that the gift bore with it a responsibility — that we should be peacemakers too (Mt 5:9; cf 5:43f; Lk 6:27f).

What does our Vincentian tradition teach us about peace and peacemaking? Three levels are evident in St. Vincent’s life and works:

1. Personal. St. Vincent holds up *gentleness* to his followers as a key missionary virtue. He tells the rather combative François du Coudray (SV I, 66) that the conversion of others is possible only through gentleness, humility and patience. He assures another priest of the Mission (SV IV, 52) that we can win the poor over only by gentleness and personal goodness. He insists that personal peace is essential to good judgment. “I think,” he writes near the end of his life, “that the ability to discern things is granted only to those who are gentle” (SV XII, 190). Vincent’s life matched his words. Abelly tells us that many regarded him as the gentlest man of his time.
2. Relational. St. Vincent encouraged the members of the Congregation of the Mission to work at healing broken relationships. One of the goals of “the mission” was reconciliation (CR XI, 8). Actually, missionaries frequently reported to St. Vincent about their success in settling quarrels. It is clear from his letters that Vincent himself attempted to mediate many disputes in his lifetime among the members of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, and others whom he counseled.
3. Societal. In the wars that afflicted France during the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, Vincent worked actively as a peacemaker. He witnessed the ravages of violence firsthand and saw the grief that war brought to the poor

especially. Around 1640, during the civil strife in Lorraine, he went to Cardinal Richelieu, knelt before him, and pleaded for peace. Richelieu refused, responding that peace did not depend on him alone. In 1649, during the civil war, he left Paris quietly, crossed battle lines and forded a flooded river (at almost 70 years of age) to see the Queen and beg her to dismiss Mazarin, whom he regarded as responsible for the war. He also spoke directly to Mazarin himself. But again his pleas went unheeded. Mazarin, in return, noted in his secret diary that Vincent was his “enemy.”

This Vincentian tradition poses three questions for us at Advent time:

- Are we peaceful ourselves?
- Do we attempt to heal broken relationships?
- Do we work in some practical way toward world peace? How?

As this Advent begins, under the shadow of violence, I think of the words of a Jewish philosopher: “Every moment can be a small door through which the Messiah can enter.” The Lord comes not just as the Rising Sun. He often arrives in the night, like a lover. At this time of darkness where there are “wars and rumors of war” (Mt 24:6), I encourage you to be at peace and to seek peace.

All genuine peace is built on justice as its foundation. When Isaiah envisioned the Messiah he wrote: “Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. The calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them” (11:5-6). Is that too just an idyllic dream? Meister Eckhart, a 13<sup>th</sup> century mystic, said that God is bringing the world to birth, but that every birth is painful. This Advent we surely recognize how painful the coming of the Lord in his fullness is. But, with you, in spite of the darkness, I believe in the Lord’s coming and in his gift of peace.

I ask you to join me in a rousing 18<sup>th</sup> century hymn that proclaims the angels’ message, and our faith, in a musical rendition of Luke’s second chapter:

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
With th’angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”*

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

**Appointments and Confirmations  
by the Superior General**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>NAME</b>		<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>PROVINCE</b>
09/05/2001	MARTÍNEZ	José	Visitor	Barcelona
10/05/2001	ZERACRISTOS	Josief	Visitor	St. Justin De Jacobis
19/05/2001	KELLY	Fergus	Director DC	Great Britain
25/05/2001	D'AMICO	Roberto	Superior	General Curia
25/05/2001	PAVLIC	Franc	Superior	El Alto
25/05/2001	VARGAS	Frank	Superior	Solomon Islands
28/05/2001	RAMAROSON	Benjamin	Visitor	Madagascar
30/05/2001	ATALLAH	Naoum	Director DC	Near East
23/06/2001	DANJOU	Yves	Director DC	North France
23/06/2001	MARTÍNEZ	Agustín	Director DC	South France
23/06/2001	PEREZ	Alain	Director DC	Switzerland
25/06/2001	CASADO	Fernando	Director DC	Granada
25/06/2001	VERNASCHI	Alberto	Director DC	Rome and Siena
13/09/2001	LIGNÉE	Hubert	Director DC	Cameroon
02/11/2001	CASTILLO	Fenelón	Director DC	Central Africa
13/11/2001	HAGOS	Tewolde	Director DC	Eritrea
11/12/2001	BORLIK	Daniel P.	Visitor	USA-Southern
13/12/2001	OTERO FROUFE	Antonio	Visitor	Salamanca

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## **INFORMATION SHEET N\_ 5 on the work and decisions of SIEV**

The confrere members of SIEV, Frs. Jean-Yves Ducorneau, John Prager, Kazimierz Stelmach, Julio Olcoz Suescun, Roberto Lovera, executive secretary, and José María Nieto, delegate from the Curia, held their annual meeting in Rome at the General Curia on 26 and 27 October 2000.

The Statutes of SIEV, which were revised at the 1999 meeting, after approbation by the Superior General and his council, were published in *Vincentiana* n. 2/2000, pp. 142ff. Thus, all confreres are able to know clearly the reality and finality of SIEV.

The organization of the Vincentian Month 2001 for the Directors of the Daughters of Charity is well underway. In January 2001, the program was sent to all the interested parties, along with the registration forms for participation.

In February 2001, the Commission charged with preparing the Vincentian Month 2002 for the advisors of Vincentian groups held its first planning meeting in Paris.

In France, on the occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the priestly ordination of St. Vincent, two “colloques” were organized: the first in Périgueux, initiated by the diocese and the second in Paris, at the Motherhouse, initiated by GRAV. The participation in both was good, even if the presence of the laity in Paris was small.

SIEV intends to continue seeking contacts for promoting, little by little, a style of collaboration and information with all the Vincentian studies organisms present in the various regions of the world in order not to duplicate similar initiatives, but to collaborate as far as possible in projects that each organism plans. Up until now, however, communication has met with delays and difficulties.

SIEV intends to furnish periodically useful materials for the formation of formators and what would help in the formation of the young on the web site of the Vincentian Family. Those responsible for the site will take care of posting these materials on the electronic page so that they will be available to everyone. They will do this as soon as possible according to their work schedule.

The study project on the figure of Perboyre on the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth (2002) drew a fair amount of support. After careful

examination, the project has been outlined according to the following areas: the person of the saint, the period of activity in France, the mission in China, the canonical process. The studies will address, in particular, the aspects which up until now were neglected or presented without a solid historical basis. These will not exceed 10-12 pages and will be collected in a popular, but seriously founded, type of publication for the confreres.

The organization of the studies on Perboyre brought out the serious problem of access to sources not yet published in books or magazines. An organization coordinating the principal archives of the Congregation, beginning with those of Paris and the General Curia, would be needed. The organization of the archives should, consequently, allow researchers in all parts of the world to know, possibly by computer, the material that is available. This is a problem of considerable proportions which SIEV is not up to facing alone.

Three fields of labor to plan for and develop in the near future were identified:

1. The study of the social doctrine of the Church with reference to the principles present in the teaching and work of St. Vincent. It could be very useful to offer the results of such a study on the web site for the formation of the confreres.
2. Finding out which magazines, particularly of a character of scientific study and of formation, are published in the area of the Vincentian Family in such a way as to make all the confreres aware of this richness.
3. Encouraging and helping the various provinces in collecting documents and compiling their own histories. It would be very important to identify the concrete ways for performing this service and the persons available and capable of doing it.  
The importance of prioritizing the various projects and initiatives which are proposed was pointed out so as to focus efforts for the success of that which will be most useful for the Congregation.

The next annual meeting of SIEV is scheduled for September 2001 in Paris.

## 2000 ANNUAL STATISTICS CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

### MINISTRIES 2000

Number of confreres involved in the ministries listed below. Each confrere is **counted only once**, considered under his principal ministry, as of 31 December 2000.

MINISTRY	PRIESTS	PERMANENT DEACONS	BROTHERS
1. Parish (popular) Missions to the faithful	134		2
2. Missionary parishes or districts	243	1	10
3. Parishes	835	1	20
4. Pilgrimage sanctuaries	49		5
5. Seminaries and clerical formation	157		3
6. Formation of our own exclusively	193		9
7. Missions Ad Gentes	108		4
8. Daughters of Charity (Director, chaplain)	147		
9. Schools (primary, secondary, superior, professional)	183	1	18
10. Social Communications (publications, radio, television)	24		1
11. Special studies	92		4
12. Chaplains: military, immigrants, hospital, associations	185		3
13. Chaplains: Vincentian Lay Groups	77		
14. Direct Service of the Poor	32		8
15. Manual work	6	1	47
16. Administration	134	1	15
17. Retired, ill, convalescing	291		36
18. Absence from the Congregation	118		2
19. Other	136		12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3144</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>199</b>

**HOUSES & INCORPORATED MEMBERS by PROVINCE – 2000**

Province	Houses	Bishops	Priests	Perm Deacons	Brothers	Students with Vows	TOTAL
<b>General Curia</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>7</b>				<b>7</b>
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>235</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>276</b>
Congo	6		32		1	3	36
Ethiopia	4	2	30		1		33
Madagascar	10	2	81		4	6	93
Mozambique	7	1	16		2		19
Nigeria	7		40		1		41
St. Justin de Jacobis	6		36		1	17	54
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>	<b>62</b>		<b>396</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>437</b>
Eastern (USA)	25		172		12	2	186
Midwest (USA)	16		122		18	1	141
New England (USA)	7		30		4		34
Southern (USA)	5		26		1		27
West (USA)	9		46	1	2		49
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>805</b>
Argentina	9		40			2	42
Curitiba (Brazil)	9	3	59		3	5	70
Fortaleza (Brazil)	3		37				37
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	14	3	72	1	9	2	87
Central America	10	3	38		3	2	46
Chile	7		26		3	1	30
Colombia	23	3	137		14	3	157
Costa Rica	4		19		2		21
Cuba	3		11				11
Ecuador	6		29			8	37
Mexico	21	1	81		4	6	92
Peru	12	1	50			2	53
Puerto Rico	14		54		3	3	60
Venezuela	14		61			1	62
<b>ASIA</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>361</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>405</b>
China	4	1	43		2		46
Northern India	11	1	65		4	4	74
Southern India	10		63		2	3	68
Indonesia	11		71		1	8	80
Orient	8	1 Pat.	39		3	2	45
Philippines	14	1	80		5	6	92
<b>EUROPE</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1374</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1499</b>
Austria	5		18		3		21
Belgium	3		12				12
Paris (France)	19		100		12	13	125
Toulouse (France)	13		71		8	3	82
Germany	4		13		2		15
Hungary	2		14		1		15
Ireland	15		93				93
Naples (Italy)	14	1	58		2	2	63
Rome (Italy)	10	1	59	1	3		64
Turin (Italy)	13		91	1	6		98
Netherlands	6		58		3		61
Poland	30	3	262		6		271
Portugal	11	1	55		2		58
Slovakia	10		35		3	2	40
Slovenia	9	2	48		4	1	55
Barcelona (Spain)	10		48		1		49
Madrid (Spain)	18		124		18	3	145

Salamanca (Spain)	21		94		12		106
Zaragoza (Spain)	21		121	1	3	1	126
<b>OCEANIA</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>57</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>62</b>
Australia	8		57		5		62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>30</b> <b>+ Pat</b>	<b>3144</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>3491</b>

**ADMITTED MEMBERS & ASPIRANTS by PROVINCE - 2000**

PROVINCE	ADMITTED MEMBERS					ASPIRANTS						
	P*	PD*	CP	CB	Total	Voc. Grps.		Min. Sem.		Prep. Yr.		Total
						TP	TB	TP	TB	TP	TB	
<b>AFRICA</b>					<b>166</b>							<b>111</b>
Congo			29	2	31					9		9
Ethiopia			21	3	24			21				21
Madagascar			21	8	29	1		9		8	2	20
Mozambique			10		10	1	1			13		15
Nigeria			55		55					11	1	12
St. Justin de Jacobis			17		17			34				34
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>					<b>13</b>							<b>19</b>
Eastern (USA)			11		11					18	1	19
Midwest (USA)												
New England (USA)												
Southern (USA)												
West (USA)				2	2							
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b>					<b>151</b>							<b>504</b>
Argentina			11		11					11		11
Curitiba (Brazil)			7		7	132				14		146
Fortaleza (Brazil)						30	2			8		40
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)			16		16	25	2	15	2	22		66
Central America			7		7	11		6				17
Chile			8	1	9	6				4		10
Colombia			35	1	36	110		6				116
Costa Rica			1		1			1				1
Cuba						3						3
Ecuador			10		10					3		3
Mexico			20		20			29		1		30
Peru			10		10	26	1					27
Puerto Rico			14	3	17			23				23
Venezuela	1		5	1	7					10	1	11
<b>ASIA</b>					<b>152</b>							<b>141</b>
China	3		1		4							
Northern India			35		35			53				53
Southern India			30		30			51				51
Indonesia			63		63							
Orient			2		2	5		15		2	1	23
Philippines			18		18					14		14
<b>EUROPE</b>					<b>121</b>							<b>91</b>
Austria												
Belgium												
Paris (France)			47	1	48	2	2			5	1	10
Toulouse (France)			2		2	1	1					2
Germany			1		1							
Hungary						2						2
Ireland												
Naples (Italy)						5				2		7
Rome (Italy)			2		2					2		2
Turin (Italy)												
Netherlands												
Poland			13	1	14							
Portugal			4		4	4		1		4		9
Slovakia			23	2	25	4	2			7	1	14
Slovenia			6		6							
Barcelona (Spain)			6		6					5		5
Madrid (Spain)			5		5			34				34

Salamanca (Spain)			4		4							
Zaragoza (Spain)			4		4			6				6
<b>OCEANIA</b>					<b>11</b>							
Australia			11		11							
International Missions										7		7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>873</b>

P\* = Priests; PD\* = Permanent Deacons; CP = Candidates to the Priesthood; CP = Candidates to the Brotherhood \* *Priests or permanent deacons coming from a diocese or another Institute*. TP = Aspirants to the Priesthood; TB = Aspirants to the Brotherhood.

## **Presentation**

*by His Beatitude Stephanos II Ghattas, C.M.  
Patriarch, Cardinal of Alexandria  
For Coptic Catholics*

Among the many interventions presented in the aula by the Synodal Fathers before the Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops on the subject of “The Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World,” those concerning the triple mission of the bishop as teacher of God’s Word, sanctifier of souls and administrator of his diocese took a major place.

To introduce this issue of *Vincentiana* dedicated to this ecclesial subject of great importance, I would like to speak of some of the qualities that a bishop should be endowed with, and which the participants in the Synod of Bishops discussed more than once.

### **1. The Bishop as servant of the Gospel**

The bishop’s mission is one of service, following the example of the Divine Teacher, who did not come to have others serve him but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for the many (Mt 20:28). He should make himself available and be within reach of all his faithful, affable and understandable.

### **2. The Bishop as father and friend of his clergy**

As the head and leader of the portion of the Church confided to him, the bishop should above all be a father for all the faithful, and especially for his clergy, his devoted fellow workers. He should be a father who shares with them the joys and sorrows of their ministry and who is interested in those experiencing difficulties. He should spend the time needed to see them and listen to them, and have confidence in them, and remain their faithful friend, following the example of Jesus Christ who said to his apostles: “I no longer speak of you as slaves. Instead, I call you friends, since I have made known to you all that I heard from my Father” (Jn 15:15).

### **3. The Bishop and service of the poor**

As a son of St. Vincent de Paul, I very much appreciated the intervention of our Most Honored Father, Robert P. Maloney, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, during the meeting of the Synod on the theme of the bishop and service of the poor, and of the bishop’s preferential love for them, as our Holy Father John Paul II never ceases teaching and putting into practice.

I hope that one of the main results that this Synod will bring to the Church and today's world is greater love and solidarity among all people, and that all of us will put into practice the lesson of the Master at the final judgment: "I was hungry ... I was thirsty ... a stranger ... naked ... ill ... in prison ... and you visited me. Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me. I tell you solemnly, that each time that you did this to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did so to me" (Mt 25:34-40).

(JOHN RYBOLT, C.M., translator)

## **St. Vincent and the Bishops**

*by Bernard Koch, C.M.  
Province of Paris*

Pierre Blet has dealt with this subject in exhaustive fashion, also availing of non-Vincentian sources like the correspondence of the nuncios; yet he was not aware of the notes of the Chancellor, Séguier.

Here, I will touch on this subject from another point of view, closer to the life of St. Vincent and his theology of the episcopate, which he touches on without developing it.

At the doctrinal level, the theology of the degrees of the Sacrament of Orders and of the specific nature of the Episcopate is succinct; episcopacy alone confers the fullness of the sacrament of orders, adding to the power to consecrate the Eucharistic Body of Jesus Christ that of sanctifying and directing his Mystical Body (which priests possess only by delegation) and that of ordaining to sacred orders. The Council of Trent defined this in its 23<sup>rd</sup> session in 1563, in chapter 4, paragraph 3, and in Canon 7. Despite this, as has been the case since the end of the fourth century, some people maintain the equality of priests and bishops, episcopacy being only an honorific and juridical distinction.

In M. Vincent's time, in 1611, the theologian, Edmond Richer (1559-1631), of the Sorbonne, maintained not only that the Church of France should rely more on its assemblies and on the King than on the Pope (Gallicanism), but also that priests were the equals of bishops. While this was condemned and revoked, it did not stop these ideas spreading into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. M. Vincent was to be resolutely attached to the bishops and to the Pope.

At the practical level, the power of the bishops was limited – on the one hand by the large number of abbeys ‘nullius,’ each with its parishes free of the bishop of the place; – on the other hand, by the right of patronage, which gave certain rights over a church or chapter to someone (ecclesiastic or lay) who had given funds to that church or chapter; – and, finally, in France, by the ‘commende’ (the gift of a ‘living’ or ecclesiastical office) which diverted the revenue and temporal power of dioceses or abbeys to lay-people granted this gift by the king in gratitude for services rendered; they needed only to receive the tonsure. In these cases, the bishop could hardly do anything but ratify the candidates presented to him. Vincent himself had to accept, from 1643, to be Vicar General to the grandnephew of Richelieu, who was the titular abbot of three large abbeys, which governed more than 150 parishes in all. I have been able to receive photocopies of six presentations, all signed in Vincent's hand, to the Bishops of Rouen and Rennes, with regard to parish priests. Moreover, since

the time of Charles VII and the ‘Pragmatic Sanction’ of Bourges, the King of France played a role in the appointment of bishops.

However, the frequency of nomination of unworthy candidates has been exaggerated; the Assemblies of Clergy at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century show that there was a majority of good bishops and even before the participation of St. Vincent, Louis XIII surrounded himself with good advisers, such as the Cardinals de la Rochefoucauld and de Gondi. Above all, approval and signing of bulls of consecration always came back to the Pope, who refused them more than once.

It is in this context that Vincent de Paul lived, completely faithful to the Council of Trent, loyal both to the Pope and the bishops, and, therefore, neither Gallicanist or ‘Richérist.’

His ideas and action are manifest throughout his life, which we are going to follow.

Vincent always called himself a son of poor country people but various texts and archival documents reveal a much broader situation, which gave him the rare facility of enjoying easy relationships with all ranks of society.

His father was a farmer, but a landowner and one of the notables of the village, poor because the region had been ravaged by the Protestant armies; moreover, agriculture was subject to the vagaries of bad weather and there were also six children to be fed. We see in Vincent a mastery of agricultural matters.

Canon Etienne Depaul, of Dax, prior of the nearby small hospice, may have been a brother of Vincent’s father; if we accept this, we see Vincent in relationship with the ecclesiastical world.

His mother was the daughter of a ‘cavier’ (cellarer), a kind of ‘knightly’ landowner of a noble property, given control of the security (nothing to do with a cellar) some 20 kilometres south of Dax, and the sister of the succeeding cellarer and of a lawyer in Dax. This situation of minor local nobility meant that the family was in direct contact with their overlords, the noble family of De Gramont, Counts of Bidache, a little further south, the last parish in the diocese of Dax.

Here we see the first meeting of Vincent with a bishop: one of the brothers of the Count of Bidache, had been the honorary bishop of Tarbes, the consecrated bishop being a subject of the De Gramonts, Salvat Diharse, became titular on the death of Théophile in 1594. We understand why Vincent was not tonsured at Dax, whose bishop had not received his bulls from Rome, but at Bidache, and not by the Bishop of Aire, but by Salvat, even though Tarbes was further from Dax

than Aire. Here we see him thrown into the world of the nobility and the episcopacy.

If he was ordained priest only on 23 September 1600, even though he had had his dimissorial letters for a year, it was because his new bishop, Jean-Jacques Dusault, having come to Dax in January 1600, had convoked a synod from March to April and settled upon a strict reform, which set the chapter in revolt on the grounds of ‘abuse of power,’ refusing any participation in his services at the cathedral. The bishop could not celebrate pontifically and the entire process lasted three years. As for being ordained at 19 years of age instead of 24, that was not uncommon in those times.

Vincent waited, then looked for another bishop, seeing that the affair was dragging on. His choice of François de Bourdeilles at Périgueux can only be explained in terms of the complexity of relationships. But why not the bishop of Toulouse? Or of Tarbes? We lack any documentation.

In October 1604, he gained his bachelor’s degree in theology and the license to teach the second Book of the Sentences of Peter Lombard and began teaching in Toulouse.

The Barbary Captivity, from July 1605 to June 1607, changed the course of events,<sup>1</sup> plunging him into the experience of the distress of slaves, which was to obsess him all his life, without diminishing his other works.

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<sup>1</sup>Since Antoine Rédier, *La Vraie Vie de St Vincent de Paul* (Grasset, Paris, 1927) it has become fashionable to deny Vincent’s captivity. Rédier’s only argument is that it is unbelievable; later, he wrote how a Vincentian had asked Grandchamp, attaché at the French Embassy in Tunis, to seek out arguments in order to root the negation more strongly, arguments which were completely dismantled by the specialist, Turbet-Deloff, director of Maghreb Studies at the University of Bordeaux, and by several archival recent publications, confirming that Vincent’s account is strongly plausible. Moreover, nobody has ever analysed the beginning and end of the two famous letters, and certainly not the two signed manuscripts; the focus has been on the central account and on the account only in the printed version. Yet the two letters, from Avignon and Rome, are not written rapidly, like the other letters of Vincent, but very carefully, and, something Pierre Coste did not indicate, the two are ‘flourished,’ that is to say that the signature is followed by the arabesques proper to each participant in a notary or judicial act. Vincent never uses his flourish in letters to friends but always in such notary or judicial acts. What is more, the two are addressed to M. de Comet, a lawyer, and copies are sent, the first to M. D’Arnaudin, a notary who was working at the bishopric, and the second to M. De Lalande, police lieutenant of Dax! Finally, their purpose is not the account but a very official act: a recognition of the debt, with an explanation of the reason for the delay in paying (i.e. the captivity) and a promise to do so as soon as possible, in conformity with acts set down in law by notaries. One can find references to these legal acts in my article “Saint Vincent; expert en procédure,” published in the *Bulletin des Lazaristes de France*, no. 168, April 1999. In short, even if the style is lively and somewhat novel-like, these letters are official acts, addressed to people who could easily have had them verified by the Consulate of France in Tunis. As for the ‘novel’ style, it is a frequent one with Vincent, expert in dynamic accounts and lively scenes. On the other hand, we know his obsession with aiding the slaves of the Muslims, and his undertakings in Rome in order to be granted missions in Salé in Morocco, Babylon in the Near East, although only Tunis and Algiers came to fruition; no other French spiritual master had this preoccupation.

His escape with the renegade, generally ingenious people (flights of renegades are numerous) led him to Avignon in July 1607. He quickly became associated with the nuncio, who took him with him to Rome, in the hope of forming useful relationships. There, besides his visit to the sick poor in the charity hospital, he moved in the world of the cardinals, while awaiting some worthwhile nomination. He was sadly mistaken, as he wrote several times afterwards; the Romans do not like people who are in a hurry.

This constitutes the first phrase of his vision: the bishops as purveyors of desirable positions!

Why did he arrive, at the end of 1608, in Paris and not in Dax as he had promised in his second letter? We can only offer some hypotheses...

Vincent was quickly named among the distributors of alms for Queen Marguerite, the repudiated wife of Henri IV. This was probably at the intervention of his Bishop in Dax, Jean-Jacques Dusault, who had good relations with Henri IV and was the first almoner of this queen.

At the same time, his concern about the spiritual life urged him to frequent the spiritual circle of Mme. Acarie and her nephew, Pierre de Bérulle, where he opened himself little by little to the pastoral dimensions.

This did not stop him continuing to seek financial resources, in order to return close to his mother and to support his family. We do not know how he came to link himself with the Archbishop of Aix-en-Provence, Paul Hurault de l'Hôpital, Councillor to the King in his Council of State, who held the honor of the abbey of St Leonard de Chaumes, near La Rochelle since 1609. In May 1610, Paul terminated this in his favour, which gave Vincent the hope of being able finally to return close to his mother, as he had written to her on 17 February 1610.

On Saturday 16 October 1610, in taking possession of St Leonard de Chaumes, he presented the bull of nomination of Pope Paul V, of 27 August 1610, and the official letters expedited by his bishop, Jean-Jacques Dusault of Dax, dated 20 September 1610.<sup>2</sup>

His stock of relations with bishops was thus greatly increased but, up to this point, it was with the hope of gaining favours, financial if possible. As for St Leonard, he was involved in a long legal process from 1611 and at times had to go to La Rochelle.

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<sup>2</sup>Departmental Archives of Charente Maritime, Series 3E 1203, Folio 229. Minutes of Maître Combault, notary of La Rochelle, Register 1608-1610, bundle of 1610. Archives of the Mission, photocopy.

In Paris, he continued his meetings with Bérulle's circle. He became so apt at parochial ministry that, when Bérulle founded the Oratory on 10-11 November 1611 with some priests, including Bourgoing, parish priest of Clichy, it was Vincent whom he judged capable of succeeding Bourgoing in Clichy.

He did not take possession of it until May 1612, having stayed, at least for some periods of time, at the Oratory, which he would continue to visit. There, he was to discover a major element in his pastoral spirituality and his vision of relations with the bishops was to change completely; this would mark the 'second phase.'

Bérulle, preparing the foundation of the Oratory, sought to mark its difference with regard to religious, especially to the Jesuits, by showing that he did not wish to found a religious institute exempt from the bishops, but to remain linked to them by pastoral and missionary obedience. He had written this in his Project for the Congregation of the Oratory of Jesus, at the end of 1610<sup>3</sup>:

*And, since all must be ordered in the Church and since God has joined with the Holy See in our time a Society which is that of the Jesuit Fathers, this 'The Oratory' will be joined to the prelates by the vow of obedience, as for the exercise and use of ecclesiastical functions (apart from those which are matters of honour or of jurisdiction); and by this means we will renew the use of the vow which is made at the consecration of priests and which seems to be essential to the state of priesthood.*

Vincent was to have the same attitude with regard to bishops in the *Contract of Foundation* and in the *Common Rules* of his Congregation, going so far as to say that we are "of the Religion, 'that is to say Congregation,' of St. Peter or, even more, of Jesus Christ ... Oh! What a great source of consolation to be in the Order of St Peter."<sup>4</sup>

This is an enormous turn-about: the bishops seen as animators, pastors, of the body of Christ. This is spiritual, pastoral and ecclesial progress!

He was even to be drawn into friendship, within the year, with one of the great bishops of his time, Francis de Sales, for whom he gave a long testimony, at the process for his beatification.<sup>5</sup>

This did not, however, lessen his financial needs and Bérulle sought to find him some supplementary subsidies by enabling him to enter as tutor into the

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<sup>3</sup>Jean Dagens, *Correspondance du Cardinal de Bérulle*, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup>To the Missioners, On the Vows, 7 November 1659, SV XII, 376.

<sup>5</sup>SV XIII, 66-84.

family of the General of the Galleys, Phillipe-Emmanuel de Gondi, bearer of a number of important lordships, baronies and the 'Countship' of Joigny, received as a wedding present from his uncle Pierre, the Bishop of Paris from 1568 to 1616. Apart from his service in the family and the care of Clichy, Vincent took on the ministry to the villages of the de Gondis when the family was in residence there.

Pierre was succeeded in the Bishopric of Paris by a brother of Phillipe-Emmanuel, Henri, who died in 1622, and then by another brother, Jean-François, from 1622 to 1654, with whom Vincent was to have a great many dealings.

Vincent's pastoral zeal continued at Clichy, either through himself or his curate, and in the villages of the Gondis. There he instituted a practice of the Jesuits; a general confession of one's whole past life, which was to put him in contact with various bishops, as he sought to obtain the power to absolve cases reserved to the bishops. We still have such a request to the Vicar General of Sens, dated 20 June 1616.<sup>6</sup>

We do know the following: a case arose on the lands of Madame de Gondi, near Folleville, at Gannes, when a peasant told this lady about his spiritual liberation and she, discovering this wretchedness, urged Vincent to preach on this subject, which led to a great flood of penitents and required Vincent to call on a team of priests, a practice from which he never desisted: missions were always to be given as a team.

In the meantime, the Archbishop of Lyons, Msgr. de Marquemont, in order set up a centre for missions,<sup>7</sup> had asked Bérulle to found the Oratory at Châtillon-les-Dombes, in Bresse, northeast of Lyons, a town right at the heart of a region ravaged by the French campaigns of Henri IV between 1594 and 1600. Bérulle, who founded the Oratory in some other towns, suggested that Vincent go there. We still have the requests in the Archives of Lyons, but, it was with the Vicar General that Vincent had dealings, since Msgr. de Marquemont was absent from Lyons from the 18 or 19 June.<sup>8</sup>

Recalled to Paris to be with the Gondis, he began to preach more intensively on their lands, always as a team of priests and initiating everywhere the Confraternities of Charity, of women and, occasionally, men. The necessity of having these approved again put him in contact with many other bishops; Sens

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<sup>6</sup>SV I, 20-21.

<sup>7</sup>Copy in the 1686 dossier in the Departmental Archives of the Rhone, Historical Section (19 H 1), 2 Chemin de Montauban, 69005, Lyons.

<sup>8</sup>Indications coming from the registers of 'Provisions' (Departmental Archives of the Rhone, Historical Archives, 1 G 87 = register 8) and 'Insinuations' (1 G 120 = register 79); on these dates, the acts are signed by the Vicar General.

and Soissons in 1618, Amiens in 1620 etc.<sup>9</sup> The foundation of houses of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity would also see him in contact with a number of bishops.

He remained as parish priest at Clichy until 1626 and, doubtless, it was there that he gave his sermon preparing for the visit of the bishop: Jean-François de Gondi paid a visit there on 9 October 1624. We have very few doctrinal texts from Vincent: here is one, neglected because it is simply an outline, but in five short points he expresses his vision of the Church and the primary pastoral, not simply juridical, but spiritual role of the bishops.<sup>10</sup>

Here we see Vincent thrown into ministerial contact with the bishops and that was only to increase with the beginning of the Congregation of the Priests of the Mission. The *Contract of Foundation* was submitted to a notary on 17 April 1625 and, on 24 April of the following year, Jean-François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris, signed his approval.<sup>11</sup>

This contract of foundation shows us afresh this new stage, which is also in fidelity to Bérulle; it stipulates, exactly as Bérulle's 'project' and Rule had done, that the missionaries were to "renounce all benefices, offices and Church dignities" in order that "at the good pleasure of the prelates, each with respect to his own diocese, to give themselves entirely and purely to the salvation of the poor people."

Here is the central point, throughout his life, of his position with regard to the episcopate, which was to be that of the Missioners up to our time. In the *Common Rules* disseminated in 1658, we no longer find the interdiction against Church dignities and honours but we continue to find, in chapters V, § I and XI, § 5 reference to union and obedience in everything which refers to the ministry; and to that we have remained faithful.

Let us anticipate, following this line; when the time came for establishing the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability in service of the poor, Vincent, seeking ways to ensure that these would not turn into religious vows, considered, among other things, a fifth vow, as he wrote to Jane de Chantal on 14 July 1639: "obedience to our lordships the bishops in the dioceses in which we are established, with regard to the above-named functions."<sup>12</sup>

He remained firm, however, that the governance of the temporal goods of the Congregation and the nomination of superiors remained in the hands of the Superior General. He made a distinction between the ministry, the role of the

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<sup>9</sup>SV XIII, 442 and 456, 463, 482 and the bottom of 419, a note on document 125.

<sup>10</sup>SV XIII, 57-60, and Pierre Coste, *Le Grand du Grand Siècle* I, p.77.

<sup>11</sup>SV XIII, 202 and 203.

<sup>12</sup>SV I, 563.

Missioners in the Church and the internal life of the Congregation, which is another 'cell' of the Church, independent of the bishops, approved by the Pope on 12 January 1633.

Many works had taken form in the meantime, apart from the country missions, its first end. One was, from 1628, the formation of future priests.

The Bishop of Beauvais, Augustin Potier, who had already been in contact with Bourdoise, who did not have formators to send to him, knew Vincent through Jerome Duchesne, one of his principal vicars, who had given a mission with Vincent in 1621 at Montmirail.<sup>13</sup>

On 16 July 1628, during a journey with Vincent,<sup>14</sup> Potier revealed to him his idea for retreats or sessions, lasting 10 to 15 days, before ordination, giving an elementary doctrinal and especially pastoral formation. Vincent took it up, looked for collaborators, and, from that September, the Exercises for Ordinands began, first at Beauvais and then soon in Paris and elsewhere, as we know.

Here then is a third stage: Vincent goes further than obedience to the bishops, now he enters into collaboration, sometimes even friendship, with them.

Certain people, who had benefited from these retreats, finding this format somewhat insufficient, even if they had also pursued courses in theology, suggested that these be continued after ordination. This was the origin of the Tuesday Conferences in 1633. Participants contributed to Vincent's missions in the villages and assured the missions in the large towns, where the Congregation of the Mission had excluded itself from going.

Friendships with the bishops increased with the foundation of the Major Seminaries, starting in 1641 at Annecy. The Bishop of Cahors, Alain de Solminihac, reformer of his diocese and his abbey at Chancelade, was one of the first.

Vincent was to follow other avenues, probably as a result of his position as General Chaplain to the Galleys, which was to put him in contact with royalty. On the other hand, in 1638, the Tuesday Priests gave the important mission at St Germain en Laye, where Louis XIII and Anne of Austria were staying, who, along with Richelieu, had the task of finding good bishops for nomination. In fact, one of the Tuesday Priests, Nicolas Pavillon, was its major animator.<sup>15</sup> It is hardly astonishing that, later, he was to be named Bishop of Alet!

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<sup>13</sup>SV I, 66, note 6.

<sup>14</sup>Delettre, *Histoire du diocèse de Beauvais*, cited by Fernand Potier de la Morandière, *Augustin Potier, Évêque et comte de Beauvais, Pair de France*, Paris, undated, p. 33.

<sup>15</sup>Pierre Collet, *Vie de Saint Vincent de Paul*, I, 28a, 281. Coste, *op. cit.*, II, 317. SV I, 421, 450; XI, 282.

From that time, Vincent was part of the group of people that Richelieu consulted in order to obtain lists of bishops.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Louis XIII, just before his death, had said this to him on 21 October 1643<sup>17</sup>: *The late king, a little before his death, did me the honour of telling me that, were he to be returned to health, he would not allow anyone to be made bishop who had not spent three years in the Mission.*

As is evident, this did not come about, but more than one bishop was chosen from the advice of Vincent, the retreats for Ordinands and the Tuesday Conferences.

We know that after Richelieu's death at the end of 1642, and of Louis XIII in 1643, the Regent, Anne of Austria, formed a Council of Conscience, a simple consultative body, which she loved to listen to, even if Mazarin did not always follow its counsel. To join the Chancellor Séguier, Jacques Charton, the official of Paris, and Augustin Potier, she called on M. Vincent. This marks the fourth step in his links with the bishops; an official responsibility for the choice of candidates for bishoprics.

The Council had to deal with the nomination of bishops and coadjutors, which involved questions of revenue also. Several Tuesday Priests, friends of Vincent, were thus nominated: Antoine Godeau to Vence, François Perrochel to Boulogne etc. It also dealt with litigation and suchlike cases.

Vincent objected to the nomination to Le Mans of Beaumanoir de Lavardin, whose faith was doubtful. And he knew it!<sup>18</sup> Then, at the end of January 1649, as the Fronde was beginning, Vincent had to flee Paris by horse with Br. Ducournau, going to St Germain-en-Laye to ask the Regent and Mazarin for the latter give up power, at least for a time. He was turned away and could not return to a Paris in revolt, risking being accused of machinations with royalty. They fled to the town of Richelieu, stopping for a time with the confreres in the seminary at Le Mans. Vincent could not neglect to pay his respects to the Bishop, to whom he sent the superior of the house. Beaumanoir was very honoured and, in friendly fashion, had it said to Vincent, who was unable to go and thank him, the Bishop having already set off elsewhere.

Independently of the Council of Conscience, from 1643 on, he was in contact with a new bishop, his former pupil, Jean-François-Paul de Gondi, who became coadjutor of his uncle in the See of Paris and then, on the latter's death, succeeded in 1654, becoming Cardinal de Retz. It was he who, on 20 November 1646, signed the document which erected the autonomous society of the

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<sup>16</sup>SV II, 387-388.

<sup>17</sup>SV XI, 132.

<sup>18</sup>SV III, 491, note 1. Also Abelly III, 257-258.

Daughters of Charity, and, on 18 January 1655, signed their approbation.<sup>19</sup> It was his uncle who had approved the *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, but Vincent, who wanted to alter them, waited until after his death! It was Retz who signed them, in 1657.<sup>20</sup>

Several bishops liked to lean on Vincent, or he did not hesitate to advise them. On 14 January 1640, he advised the Vicar General of Bayonne, Louis Abelly, and as a result to the bishop, François Fouquet, to be patient and gentle, and not authoritarian, in the reform of the diocese and the religious. On 29 August 1659 he was to invite the latter, transferred to the See of Narbonne, to stay with him.<sup>21</sup>

Alain de Solminihac, Bishop of Cahors, whose diocese was divided by certain ardent Jansenist parish priests, asked Vincent to join the petitions addressed to Rome with a view to having the Five Propositions condemned; these were taken, by Nicolas Cornet, from a student's thesis in theology. Vincent wrote in 1651 to a large number of bishops, asking them to sign.<sup>22</sup> Some refused, including Pavillon of Alet, who distanced himself somewhat from Vincent although the latter did not fall out with him.

In the same year, 1651, there was a revolt in Cahors by some of the clergy against Alain de Solminihac and Vincent was to be his confidant and support until the situation calmed down in 1653.<sup>23</sup> It is true that Alain de Solminihac did not have an easy character. When he invited the Vincentians to come to his seminary in 1643, he went through three superiors in the first three years until he found one who suited him, Gilbert Cuissot, whom he kept for 29 years.<sup>24</sup> As a result, Vincent did not hesitate to warn two sisters whom he was sending to Cahors<sup>25</sup>:

*You will have need of mortification, if the Bishop of Cahors should find that you do not acquit yourselves well in your work of administration of the hospital, in order to receive humbly his advice and corrections; because the great austerity which he exercises on himself may make him seem somewhat severe.*

From 1652 on, after the end of the Fronde and the return to Paris of Anne of Austria, the young Louis XIV, and Mazarin, and although he had participated in the negotiations in order for this to happen, Vincent, as well as Augustin

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<sup>19</sup>SV XIII, 557-565 and 569-572.

<sup>20</sup>SV V, 319, 323 and VI, 440.

<sup>21</sup>SV II, 4; cf also VIII, 95.

<sup>22</sup>SV IV, 148, 149, 172, 175, 204; other references are in SV XIV, on 'Jansenism,' p. 279-280.

<sup>23</sup>SV IV, in several letters throughout this volume.

<sup>24</sup>Christian Dumoulin, *Alain de Solminihac, Au service de Dieu et de sa gloire*, Téqui, 1981, pp. 157-158. Coste, *op. cit.*, II, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup>SV X, 579-580.

Potier, was practically excluded from the Council of Conscience, which Mazarin, moreover, hardly ever convened again. Shut out from official interventions, Vincent could now only rely on private action, still consulted more than once by various bishops and doing 'his little bit.'

What can we deduce from this? In this arena as in others, Vincent shows himself to have great faith, a lively charity and a strong hope in the midst of all the obstacles and resistance of others, a strong sense of what was real and possible, with, besides humility and simplicity, two qualities which sum up his charity in a simple phrase: "cordial respect." Respect without cordiality becomes distant; cordiality without respect risks humiliating the other. We might also recall: be "firm of purpose, flexible about the means." All of this wrapped in a great love for Jesus Christ and his Church and a great desire to imitate the Trinity; unity in diversity of persons.

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See also the biographies of several of the bishops who had contact with St Vincent.

(EUGENE CURRAN, C.M., translator)

## Intervention of Superior General in the Synod of Bishops

My name is Robert Maloney. I am the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. Both are Apostolic Societies founded by St. Vincent de Paul. I am speaking in my own name.

In 1643, the Queen of France named Vincent de Paul to the Council of Conscience, a body lead by Cardinal Mazarin. One of its principal tasks was to recommend the names of persons who might be bishops. In an environment of great political intrigue, Vincent labored hard for ten years for the reform of the clergy and the naming of active pastoral bishops. Mazarin, who had much more political criteria for filling vacant sees wrote in his secret diary that Vincent was his enemy. After a decade, Mazarin succeeded in having Vincent removed from the Council, but Vincent carried on a steady correspondence with deeply committed, reforming bishops, encouraging them.

As I read the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which is filled with hope, I see that it is impossible for a bishop to carry out the huge list of tasks laid before him. So I ask myself, if Vincent de Paul were alive today, what priorities would he place before bishops today? I suggest to you two:

1. Be a father and a brother to the poor in your diocese (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 141). Make the Church's preferential option for the poor shine out like a beacon of hope in your person. Go out to Jesus yourself in the person of the poor. In the day of judgment this is the principal criterion by which you, and all of us, will be assessed. "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me to drink" (Mt 25:35). So I urge you, be a father, even a brother, to the poor. Let your diocese be a place where the Church really is the Church of the poor. Awaken the concern of its members, the wealthy especially, that they might work with you in the service of the poor. Bring together young and old, men and women, clergy and lay, rich and the poor themselves in the service of the most needy. Pray with the poor. Eat with the poor. Plan with the poor, so that they might have a voice in their own future. Celebrate the Eucharist with them. Share the word of God with them. Communicate to them your own conviction that the Kingdom of God is here and that it is for them. And since women and children are almost always the poorest of the poor, stand at their side in their struggle for basic human rights. Be a father and a brother to the poor of your diocese.
2. Be a father and brother to the priests of your diocese (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 86). Be able to say to them, as Jesus says to his apostles in John's 15<sup>th</sup> chapter (15:15): "I call you friends." Most of all, listen to them. Be a minister of God's healing, encouraging word to them. Pray with them,

both at the Eucharist and in other forms of quiet, meditative prayer. Eat with them. Relax with them. Offer them rich initial and ongoing formation. Plan with them. Formulate with them how the parishes of your diocese and the diocese as a whole might launch creative, effective projects in the service of the poor. Be a father and brother to your priests.

When Vincent de Paul died in 1660, the preacher at his funeral stated: “He transformed, so to speak, the face of the Church.” My dream is that these same words might be written as the epitaph of every bishop here and throughout the world. “He transformed the face of our local Church. He was a father and brother to the poor and a father and brother to his priests.”

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Vatican City, October 2001

## **Reflections on the Synod of Bishops October 2001**

by Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

This was the second time that I have participated at a synod. My reactions are very similar to those which I expressed in *Vincentiana*\* after the Synod on Consecrated Life in 1994.

Like General Assemblies, synods are a long, sometimes tedious experience. During the month, there were morning and afternoon sessions every day except Sunday. Almost all participants found the methodology rather trying. Many criticized it and asked that it be changed in future synods. Basically, we listened to 250 discourses in a row, each taking five to eight minutes. The general topic was “The Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World,” but within that framework a participant could talk about any subject that interested him. There was no particular order to the talks, so that a first bishop might talk about ministry to the poor, a second about the importance of prayer in the life of a bishop, a third about the diocesan curia, a fourth about the need for financial help in poor dioceses, and so on. The reader can imagine how difficult it is to concentrate on 250 talks about scattered topics. After that the synod broke up into language groups, each of which had about 20 members. The groups formulated propositions, which were then amended and voted upon by the entire assembly. These were presented to the Holy Father as advice. Over the next year or two, a commission will prepare a document that will be examined and ultimately approved by the Pope. It will then be published. There have been many outstanding synodal documents, like *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Christifideles Laici*.

For me personally, there were some notable differences between the Synod of 2001 and that of 1994. The topic of this synod (the ministry of bishops) was much less interesting to me than the theme of the first one in which I took part (on consecrated life). Moreover, in the 1994 synod I was a full member, whereas in this one I was an auditor. That difference, however, did not actually affect my participation very much, except that I did not vote on the final propositions. This time, for the group work, I was a member of an Italian-speaking group (since too many participants asked to be put in the English-speaking groups). That, I found, hindered my ability to contribute to the precise formulation of propositions, though I must say that group members were quite helpful whenever anyone (there were others like me!) was struggling to find the right word or grammatical construction in Italian.

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\* *Vincentiana*, Year XXXVIII (1994) 361-367.

In spite of the difficulties that I and many others encountered, there were many positive aspects to participating in the synod. I list these below:

1. The bishops and other participants came from every country in the world. I met many outstanding people and had opportunities to talk with them each day in the synod hall and during the coffee breaks. There were 50 cardinals, about 200 bishops, around 15 superiors general, five observers from other Christian Churches, and about ten lay observers, both men and women (the very limited participation of women was one of the synod's weak points).
2. The Holy Father took part in all the plenary sessions, which were numerous. That meant, in the concrete, that he was there from 9 until 12:30 in the morning, and from 5 to 7 in the afternoon, almost every day during the first two weeks and on scattered occasions after that.
3. Many bishops spoke quite freely, a number in their own name, and others in the name of their bishops' conferences. There was great emphasis on the ecclesiology and spirituality of communion. Much hope was expressed about the life of the Church. Some bishops criticized the methodology of synods and called for greater collegiality. Some expressed frustration about the functioning of some of the branches of the Roman Curia. Some questioned the weight given to the voice of nuncios in the appointment of bishops.
4. There were some striking talks. I was very moved when a bishop from Sudan related how more than three million people in his country have been killed in the civil strife there, though few in the world have hardly noticed. I was also quite struck as a bishop from Cambodia described how his entire country was transformed into a huge concentration camp under the rule of the most radical Communist government in history. In this tragic, fatal experiment millions died, as all were moved from their native villages to communal work sites. Books were burned and intellectuals were exterminated. A stark revolutionary ideology became the only accepted thought pattern. I was also quite moved as African bishops spoke of the ravages of AIDS and malaria in their countries.
5. During the synod, each participant is invited to dine, at lunch or supper, with the Holy Father. As the reader might imagine, that is a moving, impressive occasion. I went one evening for supper, along with eight other people. During supper, it was clear how much the Pope's health has declined. Though he is quite alert, it is evident that he is at times very weak physically. I admired his courage in continuing to invite groups of people twice a day to eat with him.

6. A “message” is composed during the synod and voted upon by the members (this is different from the post-synodal document, which is published a year or two later). I liked the message very much. It is filled with hope and at times quite eloquent. I found the section on youth particularly striking.
7. During the last week of the synod I was also participating, in a limited way, in the First International Meeting of the Miraculous Medal Association. All its members were able to come to the closing Mass of the Synod for which, fortunately, we were able to obtain very good tickets. Basically, the representatives of the Association sat in the first row, right behind the concelebrating bishops. They were delighted to be there.
8. After the closing Mass, the Holy Father hosted a final dinner for all the synodal participants, at Santa Marta where the Daughters of Charity serve. There was no particular seating order. At table, on my right was the Superior General of the Marianists and on my left was the Archbishop of Chicago. Also at the table were a bishop from New Zealand, the Archbishop of Utrecht in Holland, and a laywoman from South Africa. At the end of the banquet, the Holy Father shook hands with each person to say good-bye. By that time, he looked exhausted, as were many of us!

## **The Sign of Unity**

### **Interview with our Confreere about the Synod of Bishops**

*Most Rev. Souraphiel Demerew Berhane Jesus, CM*  
*Archbishop of Addis Ababa*  
*President of the Episcopal Conference of Ethiopia and Eritrea*

#### **The Synod of Bishops and the Church**

- 1. What is your perception of the Church based on what you saw, heard, experienced, and reflected on during these days of the Synod?*

The Synod gave me the chance to experience just how Catholic our Church is. It is the first time that I participated in an ordinary Synod, and it gave me the chance to meet bishops from all over the world: from countries large and small, from countries rich in ancient Christian traditions, as well as from countries where the faith was implanted just a short time ago. From everything that was said, as I listened to the various interventions, and the different reflections, I came to see just how universal, and thus how Catholic we are as a Church.

- 2. What, in your opinion, was the strongest call that the Synod made to the Catholic Church?*

It wasn't expressly said, but, without a doubt, the strongest call of the Synod was for unity within the Catholic Church. Even though there is so much division in the world, our Church has remained united. Today this unity is expressed with Peter and under Peter.

For myself, this unity is essential. Let me cite an example. I am the president of the small Episcopal Conference of Ethiopia and Eritrea, composed of 11 bishops. Unfortunately, these two countries have been at war. Nonetheless, the bishops have remained together; no one wished to split the Conference in two. This has not been easy. There have been some tensions, but we have remained in one Conference of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Holy Father has encouraged us to work together in this way. Our small Conference has thus been a sign of hope to our people, even though the other Churches have been divided, the other religions—even the Moslems were divided among themselves—the soldiers, the politicians. Wherever you look there has been division. Our experience has taught me the importance of unity, and just as many times one can fall into the temptation of dividing, one must hold on to what is essential in order to remain united.

- 3. What can the Church expect from this important meeting of the Synod?*

It can expect a lot of things. In comparison to other Synods, this session focused on the figure of the bishop himself. I would not have imagined that one could have spoken of the role of the bishop for a whole month. I thought that only the priests would have spoken about the bishops, and not the bishops themselves, because it is easy for the priests to speak about the bishops, but it is not easy to speak of oneself. I discovered that the bishop has a fundamental role in the Church, not simply because he is the successor to the apostles, but because he has duties. He must teach, sanctify, and govern. At the same time, the figure of the bishop emerges from many parts of the world as a spiritual father, leaving the role of governance in second position. I myself believe that, above all, a bishop must be a father to all the faithful, and a brother close to his priests and to his religious, to everyone. Moreover, since I come from an Oriental Church, this aspect is very interesting for me, since this is our vision of the person of the bishop. The bishop is a spiritual father, free from worldly cares, a neutral party. When in my country a bishop is called “*our father*,” the people don’t think that he knows how to do everything, but that he be a father to everyone—not an administrator, or an intellectual, but a father, close to his people, sharing the life of these persons, ready to stay with them.

The distinctive note of the bishop is that he is the sign of hope, just as the title of the Synod states. Hope is important for all those who make up society: the young, the adults, families, priests, everyone. If the bishop truly is a sign of hope, then he must give a strong boost to life, and he must communicate a desire for people to continue to live. Among us, especially, where there is so much poverty and so much unemployment, he must be able to offer some hope to everyone, even to those who are not Christian. It is a very strong call, which in this Synod was felt by many bishops. In today’s world, where we witness sad scenes of divisions, tensions, and civil wars, many bishops, especially those from countries that have not known war or suffering, took notice of this call. We live in these conditions here almost every day.

Thus, for many bishops, this experience touched them deeply. Still, the question remains: how to be this sign of hope? There were many interventions on this theme.

### **The Methodology Used for Discussion**

#### *4. What evaluation would you make of the methodology used during the course of the present Synod?*

It’s a little difficult for me to evaluate the methodology because it is the first time that I participated in the Synod. The methodology I took note of points the way towards *consensus*. One doesn’t take up *controversies*, because the methodology works in such a way that one arrives directly at *consensus*. There still exist, however, many points of discussion, of controversy, even though not properly of division, but one doesn’t here of them, because they get lost in the process. A commission was set up to deal with these controversies, but one doesn’t know what will come of all this. I have no fear of

controversies, of different points of view. I would welcome these, but the methodology probably didn't offer many possibilities in this manner.

On the other hand, it is difficult to make room for every dissent in an adequate way, given the number of bishops participating (we were 350!). The very task of keeping such a large group in motion is not easy. However, everyone had the chance to speak. I spook, too, obviously. My question was: *what will we end up with at the end?* What is always evident is the consensus of the whole group, rather than differences or controversies. I ask myself simply where these controversies will end up. I don't know what the methodology will be in the future: we spoke of it, we studied it, we criticized it, and we made proposals. We will see.

## **Consecrated Life**

### *5. What can persons of consecrated life expect from this Synod?*

Because the bishop has a connection to everyone—from lay people to monks and religious, it is important that all these connections maintain a high level of importance. He must give prominence to people of consecrated life, receive them in his diocese, and have a cordial and open relationship with them, while respecting their own charism. There were bishops who spoke of tension in the administration of their dioceses, referring to the fact that in some cases there was a predominance of some religious. Now, in this case the bishop is called to create equilibrium, encouraging openness in relations, because only where relationships are frank and free of tension can everyone feel as if they are truly accepted.

### *6. What were, in your opinion, the “Vincentian ideas” that came out of the Synod?*

There were many of them. In the first place, it was said that the bishop is to be poor. For those of us in the Third World, this is nothing new, but for others it was a point that struck them greatly. To be poor, and to be simple: there is no doubt that these are Vincentian virtues. The intervention by Fr. Maloney that spoke of the humility of the bishop, of his need to be close to the poor, touched not only me, but also many others. He took his starting point from St. Vincent: “The bishop must be a father, and a brother to the poor, close to them: the voice of the poor.” I also said this, that the bishop must be the voice of the poor, as well as the father to his priests. It would be important to seek a way not to create such a great gap between the bishop and his priests; that being said, one needs to ask how this can be achieved in large dioceses with many priests. How can the bishop truly be just a simple father for them? I think that, among the Vincentian virtues, simplicity comes to the fore first. There was also some talk about the counter-sign that the bishop needs to be in relation to the appearance of having material things. Certainly,

the people want poverty and simplicity from a bishop. If a bishop has resources at his disposal, he needs to divide them, to think of others rather than of himself.

*7. Did the discussion in this Synod call to your mind the person of Justin de Jacobis?*

Certainly. One of the points of discussion we took up was inculturation. When one speaks of inculturation, it is important to respect the culture of the people in which whom he evangelizes. St. Justin de Jacobis was certainly a great example of this for our people. He was truly one with the Ethiopians: he learned their language and their liturgy; he ate with them, and he slept with them. He was accepted because he did so, he became part of the culture, and he became an Ethiopian. When the people speak of him in Ethiopia, they think of him as an Ethiopian. They don't think of him as Italian. He is one of our Ethiopian saints.

St. Justin is a great symbol of what inculturation is. During these days, I also heard bishops speak about Matteo Ricci in China. It is most important to respect the language, the culture and the civilization of the country one goes to. If, for example, Ethiopia is a poor country materially and economically, it is not poor spiritually or historically; much the opposite is true. We are also rich from a religious point of view. All of this takes in the culture of a people. To become one with the culture is an exceptionless condition for inculturating the Gospel. If the Gospel is not inculturated, it remains out of reach of the people. There will not be that true evangelization which the Pope speaks of. In this sense, St. Justin is a great example for a Vincentian Bishop.

## **Eritrea and Ethiopia**

*8. Your united Episcopal Conference is a sign for the two countries. How do the rulers and the people look at it?*

At first the two governments looked at us with suspicion, and they asked themselves why we were united. But it was the people who gave a lot of credibility to the Catholic Church. For this reason, when one speaks of rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation in peace, people believe us, because they have seen our witness of unity during the time of the war. I think that unity is important at the universal level of Church as well. There can certainly be different movements, and different viewpoints on some aspects of our social situation, but we have only one founder. In the same way, the teaching of the Church speaks of Jesus as the one Savior, something that provokes even today strong reactions in the world. But our unity is founded on this concept: Jesus Christ is our only Savior. In this vision there is no North America or South America, no Europe, Africa, or Asia. As the Catholic Church we are one with Peter and under the leadership of Peter. This interests me greatly. Our own brother delegates of other confessions, for instance, the Protestants from different countries, reaffirmed this

concept. This Church is interesting when one things of unity, certainly with all our diversity, but to be united right up till today is something very important.

## **Personal Significance**

9. *What do you think will be the personal significance for you of this Synod in your own ministry as a bishop?*

Principally, I felt like I was not alone. I think of how difficult it is to function in large archdioceses like ours in Ethiopia, with more than 300,000 square kilometers, 20 million residents, and few Catholics. What is important for us is not to make Catholic converts, because our people are already Orthodox Christiana. What is important for us is that we be present. To be present in the world of work, in society: these are the things that are important. It has been important for me to come to know that many bishops, also those who live in countries actually at war, have the same difficulties as we do. It was most helpful to me to hear their experiences. It has given me encouragement. They told me that, even if there are so many problems in my Archdiocese, even if I live in a poor country like Ethiopia, I am not alone. I found myself with brothers who are Archbishops of large archdioceses like London or Bogotá; I am thus not alone.

10. *What feelings did you have as you lived the experience of the Synod?*

I felt like a student. We arrived at the Synod; they gave us a packet of materials and an assigned place to sit. As if it were the first day of school, we looked around to see whom we were sitting next to. I had the Archbishop of Lisbon near me, and an archbishop from Perú. I learned a lot, not just from the interventions, but from the friendly exchanges during the breaks, or during a little excursion outside of Rome, like that one when we went to visit the community of the Focolarini [founder: Chiara Lubich]. That time we were all together in a bus; we all chatted. One time I was speaking with a bishop from Algeria, who told me that the Muslims had killed his predecessor. I joked a little with him as I said, “*I’m looking at a future martyr.*” There were a lot of different situations, and I learned a lot from them. None of this speaks to the expertise of the interventions of many cardinals, bishops, superiors general and experts, all of them well prepared. There was an enormous richness in everything, thank God. All the departments of the Curia today have an international stamp on them, because they are composed of members from all over the world, all truly well prepared. I thought a lot about the great opportunity these people have in guiding the Church

## **The Holy Father**

“It seems to me that this Pope, with all his international trips, has given a different look to the Catholic Church. The Holy Father is not Italian; he does not come from a country that is a great power, but from one that, until a few years ago, was under a

Communist regime. All that notwithstanding, he has circled the globe, he has visited many peoples, and he has been the father to everyone, even to people of other religions. This has been a turning point that has given the Catholic Church a wider vision of things, something perceived by many bishops.”

“The Holy Father was always with us during the Synod. We ran to be there on time, and he was always there. He was a great example for everyone. Everyone respects him, because one can see that at times he is suffering. He invited us to eat with him in groups of ten at dinner or at supper. With the little strength he still has, he tries to keep up with each one, and to be close to everyone. This was very moving for me.”

### **Hopes**

“In conclusion, I think I can say that the Church is not without hope, but that it is up to us to carry that hope wherever we go to work, sharing it first of all with our priests, then with our religious, and our lay people, and with those of other faiths, so that this hope will get to everyone.”

(ROBERT STONE, C.M., translator)

## Servant of the Gospel, and Witness of Jesus Christ in Madagascar

*by Bishop Pierre Zevaco, C.M.  
Former bishop of Tolagnaro (Madagascar)*

Two months ago, 23 September 2001, I had the great joy of planning and concelebrating the episcopal ordination of my successor, Bishop Vincent Rakotozafy.

Vincentian bishops have worked for 150 years (1896-2001) in the mission field of Fort-Dauphin (Tolagnaro) in the south of the “Red Island” (Madagascar). In the footsteps of our ancestors, Bishops Jacques Crouzet, Charles Lasne, Antoine Sévat and Alphonse-Marie Fresnel, I had the honor of handing on the apostolic flame to a son of this country. The previous missionary Church, begun in 1648 by the first sons of Saint Vincent, Fathers Nacquart, Gondrée and Bourdaise, has at last become the local Malgache diocesan Church. With my predecessors, and with our blessed father, Saint Vincent—whose heart, Father Richardson had brought with him to Fort-Dauphin for my episcopal ordination—I can now sing “Nunc Dimittis, Domine...”.

What are the main pastoral choices that guided my way and marked out my activity during my nearly thirty years of service as a bishop (beginning with my appointment by Paul VI on 26 September 1968)?

**1. “My Activity”** This isn’t the correct word! I should say “Our Activity.” The priests, brothers, sisters, laypersons, and certainly the catechists, have carried out the Mission together in the diocese. Isn’t the role of the bishop especially to be the center of **communion** of all pastoral workers? Isn’t it his role to animate, to inspire and to coordinate the activities of all those responsible for the Gospel? It is first of all here, in this activity, that the bishop is the “Servant of the Gospel.”

This communion in the presbyterate of Fort-Dauphin was even more needed because of the various origins of those who assist in the pastoral ministry. There are Malgache diocesan priests, Lazarists from France, Spain and Poland, along with our sisters, the Daughters of Charity, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Cenacle of Thérèse Couderc, the Teaching Brothers, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, both Malgache and Canadians. We have worked and lived together, alongside our lay Malgache brothers and sisters, a family united in the diversity of our charisms and mutual talents. This was sometimes a delicate experience, but nonetheless a very enriching one!

**2. Being a physician as my “first vocation”** has allowed me to live out a dual but special vocation of service to the sick, following Vincent and inspired by him to care for them “corporally and spiritually.” The service of those ill with leprosy at Ampasy, and a regular pediatric consultation, at least during the first fifteen years of my life as a bishop, gave me the joy of being the “lieutenant” of Jesus the Good Samaritan, and of encountering him and serving him in his suffering members, those who are “our Lords and Masters.” Beyond these encounters with the sick, there have been numerous daily encounters with the poor, “other Christs” who gather at the bishop’s door. Isn’t it right there that the bishop shows himself as “Servant of the Gospel and witness of Jesus Christ for the hope of the world?” Isn’t it right there that he allowed me to be and live out my preferential vocation of being an “Evangelizer of the poor?”

**3. As a son of Saint Vincent** and according to the wish of our blessed Father, constant attention and effort have been given to the “Mission among the poor country people.”

Although the long popular mission of the Vincentian tradition, led by several priests, brothers and students, has been given in only four parishes of the diocese (Fort-Dauphin, Ambovombe, Amboasary and Tsivory), the bishop’s annual pastoral visits have focused on the twelve district centers of the diocese, amounting to 450 centers for prayer and churches in the bush. The spiritual animation of the laity, of parish committees and of strong parish teams, such as Catholic Action groups for adults, youth and children, have looked to the spiritual, apostolic and missionary formation of the Christians, who live in a 90% “pagan” environment. They are “Salt of the earth and light of the world.” The work of evangelization has always tried to respect the ancestral traditions written in the culture of the Malgache people, through the work of such groups as “Preparation for the Gospel,” “Stones in Waiting,” and “Seeds of the Word.”

**4.** According to the spirit of the Congregation and of our Common Rules, special attention has been given to the **promotion of the local clergy**, with their formation and their animation through on-going formation. The proof of this is the opening of the minor seminary Fort-Dauphin, and our participation in the formation of the major seminarians at the interdiocesan seminary of Fianarantsoa.

Wasn’t the support of the diocesan clergy one of the main concerns of Father Vincent, who animated the Tuesday Conferences, and founded the first post-Tridentine seminaries? Didn’t he say that we should be “the most diocesan of the religious?”

**5.** All during this long service as a bishop, I have tried to remember daily that “the whole purpose of the Congregation is. . . to have a genuine **commitment to grow in holiness**, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which the great Master himself graciously taught us in what he said and did.” It has been my joy to live in Vincentian community, with important periods for prayer and for Eucharistic concelebration and in fraternal life. From this, I have drawn strength, courage and advice in difficult moments. My confreres and I have tried to live as best we could the evangelical counsels and the five missionary virtues, with preference for simplicity and humility, the source of meekness and zeal for the salvation of souls, through a genuine renunciation of self. I have tried to truly live out the motto I chose at the beginning of my episcopal service: “Caritas Christi urget nos”.

**6.** At the moment of my retirement, now that I am former bishop of Tolagnaro, what a joy it will be for me to be able to be **fully reintegrated into the Community**, our Vincentian Family, which I never, in fact, left! I heartily thank the priests, brothers and sisters for the confidence they gave me by receiving me as an older brother, even counselor at various times. At the general assembly of 1968, my predecessors, Bishops Fresnel and Chilouet, had asked me to have the members of the assembly treat of the reintegration of Vincentian bishops at the end of their pastoral office. This has been accomplished in our Statutes, and so here I am as a member of the formation team of the Saint Vincent Scholasticate of Fianarantsoa, working with Fathers Gonzague Danjou, François Benolo (the first Malgache priest whom I ordained), and Honoré Ramanambintana. We are responsible for the formation of our own confreres, the future missionaries of their own country, the future evangelizers of the poor in the country areas of Madagascar.

Therefore, I thank the Holy Spirit, the guide of the mission, the spirit of Jesus Christ, the first missionary.

I thank the members of the Vincentian Family, who have allowed me to live out my vocation as a priest-physician, following Father Vincent and living according to his thinking.

I thank each one of my formators who, after my parents, have made me who I am.

I thank God the Father for his grace, “which has not been vain in me.”

## **MY EXPERIENCE AS A VINCENTIAN BISHOP IN INDIA** **(Thomas Thiruthalil, C.M., Bishop of Balasore)**

### **ARRIVAL OF THE VINCENTIANS IN INDIA:**

The Spanish Vincentian Fathers of Madrid Province came to the Cuttack Mission, Orissa, India in the year 1922 and started evangelizing this area. Gradually the number of Catholics began to grow and more and more Mission Stations were opened. In 1937 Cuttack Mission was raised to the status of a diocese. In 1974, Cuttack Diocese was bifurcated into the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar and the Diocese of Berhampur. I was appointed the first Bishop of Berhampur. In 1990, the Apostolic Prefecture of Balasore was raised to the status of Diocese and I was transferred from Berhampur to Balasore Diocese as its first Bishop.

### **MY VINCENTIAN VOCATION**

I joined the Vincentians in 1952 as a young seminarian. After completing my Philosophy course in Orissa, I went to Spain to continue my studies for the priesthood. I was ordained priest in Spain in 1963. I stayed in Spain for six years.

I came back to India in 1965. I acknowledge the contribution of the Congregation of the Mission in my life. The charism and spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul had made deep impression in my life. The mission towards the poor and the downtrodden of the society had made deep impact in my life and helped me to develop a mission-oriented spirituality and a special love and option for the poor. The inspirations of the early missionary priests, especially their life-style, prayer-life, austerity, hard work, love for the poor, dedicated mission in the terrains and in the interior places and the loyalty and obedience to the authority of the Church, created in me deep impression.

As Bishop my focuses were on the formation of the laity, catechists and the future priests along with the special emphasis on starting new Mission Stations, inviting religious to work in the Diocese especially in the fields of education and health-care. When I look back and reflect on my life as a Bishop, I realize that the Lord was with me in my endeavors.

### **THE AREAS OF OUR MISSIONARY WORKS AND THE IMPRESSIONS ON IT**

#### **1. Catechetics**

Our village catechists play a very vital role in spreading the message of Christ. These catechists themselves are not much educated, but very strong in their faith and goal. They are the pioneers in getting into new villages, making contacts and preparing

the ground for a missionary to get into. They are dedicated simple village leaders at the service of the missionaries and of course, of the Word of God. To make their work more effective, these catechists were given training for teaching, preaching, and catechizing to the vastly illiterate village folk. As a result, the message of Christ has reached far and wide and the church is growing.

Visiting villages is perhaps the most exciting part of a missionary in this part of the globe. Villages are spread far and wide; many of them can be reached only on foot. People eagerly wait for the visit of a priest. It may be possible only 3 to 4 times in a year. So any visit heralds good news for the village. The villages gather together in the evening after their days work. The warm welcome that is accorded to you helps you to get refreshed. This provides you the best chance for catechizing them. You have the joy of sharing their life.

## **2. Education**

Education is fundamental to any progress. The village folk, simple and illiterate as they are accept faith whole-heartedly, but their life situation remains much the same. They value education very little. They care little to send their children to school for studies. Against this backdrop, many schools and hostels were opened by the missionaries to spread the light of education. Many of them are to be financially helped and as such we have to depend much at present on overseas help. Yet the opening schools and hostels and imparting education has brought a sea change in their lives. Many big officers proudly acknowledge their indebtedness to the missionaries and their institutions for the same. So more and more hostels have been opened. English medium schools also have sprung up for quality education to all. Now emphasis is more on education of the girl child.

## **3. Priestly Formation**

Formation of the future priests is a very important ministry for us. At present we get enough candidates to our Seminaries in Orissa. We have to give them a contextualized training so that they will be prepared to work among the people of various culture in Orissa. The number of Vincentians in India is growing. In 1997 the Indian Province of the Vincentians was divided into two Provinces.

## **4. Health Services**

Our Lord Himself went around preaching teaching and healing (Mt.4,23). For an ordinary man who is more worried about his daily existence, preaching and teaching may not mean much, but healing does. People flock to our mission centres irrespective of caste, creed or religion for medical help. There are no hospitals in most of these villages. For these villagers, the small village dispensaries that we run means a hospital. They

approach the Sisters working in the health centers for medical attention with much confidence. The faith of the people is an incentive for the missionary to reach out to the people more and more. Since there are no medical facilities in the remote villages, we have opened dispensaries in all the parishes. It is run by trained Sisters. Many places they hold mobile clinics. At times they go even walking.

Opportunities are also provided to train village health workers as it is impossible for a sister who is in-charge of the dispensary to reach out to all the villages. Thus we try to reach out to all the villages for community health care. Now the diocese has a hospital at Balasore (Jyothi Hospital) to facilitate a better health care to the people.

## **5. Promotion of Women**

The status of women in the society is very low. They work hard. They take care of the children. They suffer the injustices inflicted on them. For their betterment, various programs such as Grihini School (Home Science), Mahila Mandal (Association of Women) etc. were opened. Through Mahila Mandals, women are given awareness programmes on family life, health and hygiene, their rights, their roles in the society, savings, self-employment etc. Grihini School serves as a launching pad for self-esteem and dignity. It is here that most of the uneducated young village girls get initiated to reading and writing, health and hygiene, getting trained on tailoring, crafts etc. It also prepares them for family life. There are different training centres for the same run by different Women Religious Congregations.

Celebration of girl child day is another landmark even where awareness is created for respecting the dignity of the girl child. It involves children belonging to different faiths. The schools provide an ideal situation to create and impress upon these young minds on equality of women. It has created a tremendous impact on people.

## **6. Developmental projects.**

Through these programmes we are aiming to promote human development. Under the banner of social service wing, various activities have been undertaken such as, education, balwadi (village day school for small children), health care, housing projects etc. In times of natural calamities this wing is at the forefront in bringing succour to the affected and later get them rehabilitated. The missionaries in Orissa did a very commendable relief work to the super cyclone affected people of the coastal Orissa in 1999. In the process, it actively works in collaboration with other Non-Governmental Organizations (N.G.Os). It has not only built up a bridge between people of various faith, it has also built up confidence among people. It has helped us in making inroads to new areas for proclaiming Christ which in other circumstances could have been difficult.

## **7. Formation of Small Christian Communities (SCCs)**

The idea of S.C.C.s is relatively new in this region. We have made just a modest beginning. Priests and animators have been trained for this ministry. We started the S.C.Cs. In some of the parishes and it is functioning. This brings to the people a deeper awareness of the community.

## **8. Dialogue**

We live in a society of diverse creed, language, culture and traditions. Hence it holds pertinent to have common celebrations like, World Peace Day, National day etc. It builds up good will among the people. Coming together and holding discussions together clears a lot of air of suspicion and misunderstandings. It is also the most pressing when the suspicion runs high. The diocese has organized various programmes for dialogue on different occasions.

## **9. Fundamentalists**

“Happy are you when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of evil lies against you because you are my followers” (Mt.5,11). For the past few years, this has become a reality in this mission. A few fundamentalists have started a misinformation campaign against the missionaries, trying to create atmosphere of unhealthy tension and fear. This unhealthy atmosphere has affected our missionary works to certain extent. In this context, the poor and the marginalized are specially affected. The missionaries face these challenges with courage.

More the persecution, the more resolute we become. We know the Lord’s assistance is with us. He is our strength (Mt.28,20). United we go ahead. We look forward with optimism, courage and enthusiasm.

Balasore  
14th November, 2001

Thomas Thiruthalil, C.M.  
Bishop of Balasore (India)

## **In search of the truth... The case of Bishop Girardi**

*Interview with Bishop Mario Rios, C.M.  
Auxiliary Bishop of Guatemala City*

We are at the threshold of an important ecclesial event, the Synod of Bishops, with theme: “The bishop, servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the hope of the world.”

In *Vincentiana* we want to highlight the work being done by our confrere Bishops in the world.

We know that you have developed an important work in Guatemala, in a unique social and political situation, very similar to other countries of Latinamerica. In fact, the most noted event in the last years has been the murder of Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi Conedera, on April 26, 1998 at the entrance of his residence in the Parish of St. Sebastian (Guatemala City). You are his successor now as Coordinator of the Office of Human Rights as well as of Social Pastoral Office.

*1. Please give to the readers of Vincentiana a brief synthesis of the case of Bishop Gerardi, starting from his commitment on defense of human rights, his violent death, and the sentence that has recently been pronounced.*

Bishop Gerardi was the Bishop of Vera Paz; then he was transferred to the Diocese of Quiche; finally, he was named Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Guatemala. He was known for his Pastoral work with indigenous people and his defense of human rights. He attended primary school under the care of the Daughters of Charity in St. Mary’s school in the City of Guatemala. That is why it seems to me very normal that he would dedicate himself to the poorest and marginalized people: the indigenous.

In his position as Auxiliary Bishop of Guatemala, he founded and coordinated the Office of Social Pastoral and Human Rights for the Archdiocese of Guatemala. From this post, his most important work was the creation of REMHI (Interdiocesan Project for the **Recovery of** Historic Memory) which consisted of a strong criticism of the abuses of the Guatemalan army in the armed conflict, during which time the doctrine of “National Security” was applied . REMHI was presented in the Cathedral of the City of Guatemala on April 24, 1998. Fifty hours later, Bishop Gerardi was brutally murdered at the entrance of his own house, in the Church of Saint Sebastian, in Guatemala city.

This was a crime that had all the signs of a political crime, categorized as an “Extrajudicial Execution,” in this crime were involved three co-actors and one accomplice, all have been sentenced to 30 to 20 years in jail.

The sentence, *although not yet definitively confirmed, is still* very significant to show Guatemala and the world that there is hope for a new and different Guatemala, where we will never again have to lament such a tragic incident as this one.

*2. How was this sentence reached without any precedence in the history of Guatemala?*

The sentence was arrived as though the work and effort of the judges, the Special Prosecutor and his team; through the collaborators on the part of the Archdiocesan Office, thanks to the support of other churches, of friendly countries and also through the different Non-Government Organizations.

*3. What was your most difficult moment in this process?*

It was when they had to exhume the remains of Bishop Gerardi so that the experts designated by the ODHAG (Office of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Guatemala) were able to perform their investigation to prove that they were not dealing with a “common crime”, but with a “political crime,” that is to say, of an execution outside of the law (committed by Government persons by means of a carefully planned plot, carried out completely and in a hidden way), which makes it almost impossible to get to the truth. ***I still believe that there is no such thing as a perfect crime.***

*4. What was the role of Bishop Mario Rios after the murder of Bishop Gerardi?*

It has not been easy to continue the task begun by Bishop Gerardi. Besides being the Vicar General, Pastoral Vicar, Pastor Saint Sebastian Parish and Rector of Saint Catherine Parish, I have coordinated the Offices of Social ***Ministry, and of Human Rights for the Archdiocese of Guatemala***, helped greatly by the Legal Department that has tried to discover the truth in the crime committed against Bishop Gerardi.

*5. What do you think should be the mission of the Bishop in the face of Human Rights violations?*

To get to know the roots of the local reality in order to face the challenges that are presented, to work with the preparation and support of the persons that

collaborate in the knowledge, promotion, defense and vindication of human rights.

*6. What do you think should be the mission of the “Vincentian Bishop” in the reality of today’s world ,especially with the poor?*

It does not matter what congregation to which he pertains-even though the formation received and the ambiance in which he lives conditions his mission-he should establish priority for his pastoral work, putting all in the hands of God and feeling sure that God is the Lord of History.

*7. Please share with the confreres and laity that read Vincentiana, something of your personal reflection with regard to this tragic event of the death of Bishop Gerardi?*

If the Lord has called us, we have to renew our promise every day, up to our last day, in the way that he wants us to do it. No one knows God’s ways. He ***goes about*** leading us through many persons and events. He give us the grace and strength that is needed to confront all difficulties and contradictions. ***We have to consistent in everything*** with the help of his grace.

*Curia General C.M. – Rome, 20 June. 2001*

(ARTHUR KOLISKY, C.M., Translator)

## 25 Years of the Present General Curia House (1976-2001)

by Giuseppe Guerra, C.M.  
Visitor of Naples

Twenty-five years ago, on 29 October 1976, Fr. James W. Richardson, C.M., Superior General, gave the news, via a Circular Letter to all the Visitors, of the movement of the *General Curia* from the *Collegio Leoniano* (Rome) to the new *Casa Generalizia* at Via di Bravetta, 159.<sup>1</sup>

The *General Curia* had transferred from Paris to Rome (using part of the *Collegio Leoniano*) 13 years earlier, on 5 August 1963, in response to a decision made by the XXXII General Assembly (30 June – 14 July 1955).<sup>2</sup>

Beginning in 1958, a long search began for the acquisition of land or a building in Rome, first for the purpose of a new organization for the international House of Studies,<sup>3</sup> and then also in view of a new home for the *General Curia*.

Finally, the community purchased land on the Via di Bravetta on 26 May 1960 (almost 6 hectares).<sup>4</sup> Fr. G. Tamagnone, the Treasurer General, has given a synthetic presentation of all this in his article: “Vicende del terreno di Via di Bravetta a Roma e dell’erigenda casa” [The events surrounding the land on Via di Bravetta in Rome and the building of the House].<sup>5</sup>

Difficulties were not lacking once the land was purchased. In the first two years of the 1960s, some plans for construction were presented, so as to make use of the tax breaks available at that time; and these plans had the approval of the City Council. Regrettably, before these plans could be fulfilled, a new general regulatory plan (NPRG) became law on 18 July 1962, and so the land was deemed at a low capacity for new construction.

The appeal of this decision made on 12 April 1963, and those repeated until the end of 1967, were all rejected.

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<sup>1</sup>With the construction of new housing on property that our Community sold, a new road entering the house was created, and, in August 1991, the address of the house became *Via dei Capasso, 30*.

<sup>2</sup>The General Assembly of 1947, however, concerning the postulatium regarding the transferring of the *Curia Generalizia* from Paris to Rome, had left the decision to the judgment of the Superior General.

<sup>3</sup>From 1956, the International House of Studies occupied a part of the *Collegio Leoniano* in Rome; it had its own government with its own Superior until 1974.

<sup>4</sup>The purchase consisted of three distinct parts. While the authorization of the President of the Republic arrived in time for two of the parts, for the third part, a mechanism came into play that, because the approval did not come in time, the property was put in the name of P. Burmm (Superior of the International House of Studies). The matter was cleared up on 22 February 1995, with the “gift” of this land to the Congregation by P. Burmm.

<sup>5</sup>In *Vincentiana*, 1974, 270-279.

In the [General] Council meeting of 4 October 1964, the discussion again arose whether to remain at the *Leoniano*, to purchase one of the buildings among the many proposed, or to begin a construction program from scratch on the land that had been purchased. The discussion continued for the next few years. Only in the Council meeting of 22 April 1970 was the decision made to build on the land at Via di Bravetta, 185 (the number was later changed to 159). Fr. General, in fact, had gotten a favorable vote from the majority during the General Assembly of 1969.<sup>6</sup>

Given all this, the project presented on 11 January 1971 was rejected, because it could not be done in the zoning area E/1 in which it had been requested. Even though it was modified, and relocated in zoning area M/2, the project ran into difficulties, so much so that the Council began to ask itself if it would not be better to look for other solutions. Finally, however, the project relocated in zone M/2 was approved on 11 March 1974. The work, by the construction firm Giampaoli s.p.a. of Rome, under the direction of the architect Busiri Vici, began on 6 May 1974 and concluded two and a half years later.

During the ceremony of the blessing of the cornerstone (14 September 1974<sup>7</sup>), all of the Fathers of the General Assembly (16 August – 23 September 1974) were present. Fr. Tamagnone explained in a note distributed to everyone every useful piece of news ... *everything sober and functional* ... and the Superior General, J. Richardson, explained the purpose of the new construction: *this is not the house of the Curia, but the house of the Congregation of the Mission*.<sup>8</sup> The same affirmation was made in the Circular Letter to the Visitors on 29 October 1974: *the General Curia is the house of all the members of the Congregation of the Mission*.<sup>9</sup>

In the words of Fr. Tamagnone and of the Superior General we find synthesized both the sobriety in which the new construction was inspired, and its openness to the service of the whole Congregation.

### **Later steps**

As we have seen, the project never lacked for difficulties. Other than the cost (1,025,640,134 lira<sup>10</sup>), and a more difficult accessibility, given its distance from the center of the city, the principal purpose of an autonomous and independent house was achieved in return.

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>7</sup>*Benedictio lapidis primarii domus generalitiae (14.IX.1974) in Vincentiana (1974) pp. 477- 479.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>In *Vincentiana* 1977, p. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

It is evident that, in the following years, the two things brought out by the Superior General and the Treasurer General, the sobriety of the house and its openness to the whole Congregation, made necessary a difficult compromise; thus, in the last ten years, ways have been sought that would enlarge the house, while retaining in substance its initial criteria.

In the meantime, all the land in front of the house was sold, since it was deemed not useful for further expansion. The General Council had already given its authorization on 19 November 1969. The land was sold to the company Troiani & Grilli, which constructed five apartment buildings there. The part of the land sold that is the soccer field rented to “Tevere Roma,” was, as required by law, ceded to the City Council by that sports concern.

A different way of organizing the space, especially in regards to the Secretariat on the second floor, went into effect in 1990. After that, some more improvements were made: a new entry gate, automating the door by the use of electric cells, construction of a security wall, covering the external garage, recementing of the outside walls, installation of a new phone system, and the refitting of some rooms.

After 1996, this remodeling continued, with the use of a large space over the terrace, the rewiring of the electrical system to bring it up to code, the remodeling of the refectory, and a new alarm system. None of this mentions the ordinary maintenance of the building, nor the normal repainting of rooms. An extraordinary decoration in the front entrance hall was done in 2000 by Br. Mark Elder, CM, painter and professor of art at De Paul University.

### **The Community of the Curia**

In the first four years, the community of the Curia was directed, as it had been in Paris and in Rome, by the Superior General. In 1980, however, the new Superior General, Fr. R. McCullen, CM, wished a distinct superior for the house. The office was given to Fr. W. Sheldon, CM, whose term last for three trienniums until 1989. Thus, from 1980, the house of the Curia has had a superior different from the Superior General. His duties, as well as those of the House Council, and its relationship to the General Council, were set out in the **Local Project** of 1985. This Project, with a few modifications, was rewritten in 1992, and again in 1999.

The relations of the house with the Daughters of Charity have always been marked by the greatest collaboration. A group of sisters took care of the logistic services from 1976 until 1993 and then some sisters have worked in the Secretariat. On 21 February 1995, the land bordering the Via di Nocetta, 20,438 sq. meters in area, was donated to the General Curia by the Daughters of Charity.

As the **Local Project** states, the purpose of the General Curia House is the service of the entire Congregation, and the carrying out of the duties that the Constitutions and Statutes assign to the Superior General, to the Assistants General, and to the other members of the General Curia.

The Curia House seeks to create a community of prayer, of brotherly relationships, of works, and of goods, to promote the personal and communal growth of all the confreres in their Vincentian vocation.

(ROBERT STONE, C.M., translator)

## To the Artists of our Vincentian Family

*by Robert Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General*

I am delighted that you are meeting in these days to share your gifts and your experience as artists in the Vincentian Family. I am very grateful for your invitation to say a few words to you today and genuinely regret that I cannot be there with you personally.

Pope John Paul II, in a letter that he wrote to artists in 1999, said this:

*With loving regard, the Divine Artist passes on to the human artist a spark of God's own surpassing wisdom, calling him or her to share in God's creative power.*

So first, I thank God for the gifts you have been given. Your gifts as artists are a share in the divine artistry, the creative word that God is always speaking in the world. As God sat back and rested on the seventh day, the Creator looked at the masterpiece we call the universe, rejoiced in it, and knew that it was very, very good. It was beautiful.

The theme of beauty is decisive for the artist. St. Augustine, meditating on human existence, stated: "We cannot help loving what is beautiful."<sup>1</sup> The artist sees the beauty that lies at the core of creation and at the heart of the human person and gives expression to the transcendent mystery that underlies it. Poets, writers, painters, sculptors, musicians, architects, actors appreciate how beautiful life really is. The rest of us are often too distracted to notice. Perhaps the saints too notice, because the psalmist sings out<sup>2</sup>: "One thing I ask of the Lord, this I seek: that I may gaze on the beauty of the Lord and contemplate his temple." Of course that beauty is often hidden. But artists find beauty in both light and darkness, laughter and pain, life and death.

As you gather together today, may I suggest to you briefly three things:

1. A word on spirituality. Simplicity was the virtue St. Vincent loved the most.<sup>3</sup> He called it his gospel.<sup>4</sup> He proposed simplicity as a keystone for the

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<sup>1</sup>*Confessions* 14.3; *On Music*, 6.13.

<sup>2</sup>Ps 27:4.

<sup>3</sup>SV I, 284.

<sup>4</sup>SV IX, 606.

spirituality of every group he founded. In most of the great philosophical, theological, and spiritual traditions, beauty is intimately linked with simplicity. The most beautiful things have a unity, a coherence about them that expresses transcendent truth. The one, the beautiful and the true are all manifestations of the depths of the mystery of God.

I therefore encourage you to be simple yourselves in your spirituality. Contemplate the mystery of beauty as it lies in God's person and in the human person, and express it with a creativity that reaches out toward the infinite. Francis of Assisi expressed his prayer in these words: "You are beauty ... You are beauty!"<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine, in a contemplative moment, cried out: "Beautiful is God, the Word of God. God is beautiful in heaven, beautiful on earth; beautiful in the womb; beautiful in his parents' arms, beautiful in his miracles, beautiful in his sufferings; beautiful in inviting to life; beautiful in not worrying about death, beautiful in giving his life and beautiful in taking it up again: God is beautiful on the cross, beautiful in the tomb, beautiful in heaven. Listen to God's song with understanding, and let not the weakness of the flesh distract your eyes from the splendour of his beauty."<sup>6</sup>

I often talk about making our prayer "something beautiful for God and attractive to the young." I thank you today for helping us to pray as members of the Vincentian Family, and I ask you to continue to use your gifts generously to make our prayer beautiful. Paintings, statues, icons, music, poetry, drama, even just good reading are art forms that make prayer and liturgy come alive. Fifteen years ago at a college in England I heard a young woman, a member of the theater company, read the part of the woman at the well from John's gospel during a Lenten Eucharist. I remember it to this day. I encourage you to use your artistic gifts to express the deepest yearnings of the human heart. That is one of the principal aims of liturgy, and in the Christian tradition artists have always played a fundamental role in the expression of the Christian community's spirituality.

2. A word about the poor. The poor are often not just poor materially, but also culturally. I suggest to you today that, as artists, you have wonderful gifts to offer them. It is helpful to recall that in previous centuries drama and opera often provided space for the poor as part of the audience. Frescos and mosaics are still often referred to as the catechism of the poor of the Middle Ages. Art nourishes the soul. It opens the mind, the heart, the spirit to beauty. It raises consciousness and in that sense it is utterly

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<sup>5</sup>*Lodi di Dio Altissimo*, verses 7 and 10.

<sup>6</sup>St. Augustine, *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, 44, 3, as quoted in Timothy Radcliffe, *Sing A New Song: The Christian Vocation* (Springfield, Illinois: Templegate Publishers, 1999) 281.

liberating. A question that I pose to you is this: How can you, as artists, share your gifts directly with the poor? I am certain that they will love your gifts. When I was a boy in the sixth grade, a creative teacher took us to the music room once a week and introduced us to opera. I was only 11 years old. I still remember all of the pieces we listened to, many of which she taught us to sing. To this day I consider that as one of the great gifts in my life. Are there similar ways in which you can share the experience of beauty with the poor?

3. A word about youth today. All great art is an expression of the depth of the human spirit. Real beauty breathes spirit. It expresses soul, passion, longing for transcendence, yearning for meaning, for wholeness, for joy. So I encourage you as my brothers and sisters, artists in the Vincentian Family: Pass on the beauty that you contemplate to generations still to come, especially to the young. The beauty you share with them will stir them to wonder! It will draw them to contemplate the same mystery that is at work actively in your heart as artists. Help the young to nourish within themselves the life of the spirit. Genuine art will draw them into its depths. Stimulate them to contemplate beauty, as did St. Augustine, who expressed his prayer so well: “Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you!”<sup>7</sup>

Dostoyevsky once wrote: “Beauty will save the world.”<sup>8</sup> I hope that the beauty that you express will be a transparent sign that God is alive in the world and that the glory of the Risen Lord shines out like the rising sun.

Vincentian Artists Symposium  
Chicago, Illinois, USA, June 2001

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<sup>7</sup>*Confessions* 10, 27.

<sup>8</sup>F. Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, Part III, Chapter 5.

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**FRANÇOISE BOUCHARD**

**Saint Vincent de Paul ou la Charité en action**

Published by Résiac. Collection « Flambeaux de la Foi »  
Montsûrs, France, 2001, 288 pages

So much has been said about St. Vincent that one can forget the strictly historical truth. With an authentic description, unanimously ratified in the preface by Bishop Ulrich, Archbishop of Chambéry, and in the epilogue by Fr. Robert Maloney, the author restores it for us in this book about St. Vincent. A captive of pirates in North Africa, he belonged successively to four different owners, without ever having any other Lord than Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ in each poor person. The author describes a humble St Vincent surrounded by the important people of this world. He was a giant in heart and soul in the middle of small people. A priest among prelates, he was a preacher of mercy. The light of his unfailing smile, a bit mischievous, which conquered hearts, and the fire of his glance.... We have that here! And what a blaze of charity!!

**JEAN-YVES DUCOURNEAU, C.M.**

**Vincent de Paul – L’amour à l’infini**

Published by Médiaspaul, Paris, June 2000, 254 pages

The life of St. Vincent de Paul is bound up with the immense current of charity, which began with him and extended itself beyond the Catholic Church. Born near Dax in 1581, he knew a life of contrasts. A priest tested by doubts, guide of consciences, organizer of help, evangelizer..., this man with a passion for Christ was also the founder of three ever-active works: the Congregation of the Mission, the Company of the Daughters of Charity, the International Association of Charities.

Four-hundred years later this Gascon, “inventive to infinity,” calls us, with today’s means, to give life to the most deprived.

Msgr. Michel Dubost, in the preface to this book, states that the author rightly tries to show the relevance of St. Vincent. “This relevance can be summed up by a call to the revolution of Love and to that word which was attributed to him at the end of his life in reply to someone who asked him what he would have liked to have done that he did not do: “more.”

**GETÚLIO MOTA GROSSI**

**Um Místico da Missão, Vicente de Paulo**

Published by Santa Clara, Rio de Janeiro, 2001, 271 pages

“This small book is directed in a special way to the young students of the Congregation. It wishes to help to “provide reason” for their option of faith in the service of the poor, and also wishes to be useful to the confreres who are not so young and to all those who are inspired and cultivate the spirit of St. Vincent. Moreover, it wishes to recall, awaken, enrich, encourage towards an ever-greater fidelity to the charism of St. Vincent and to the spirit, which he implanted in the Church of God. In it, the foundational act, the option for the poor, the priorities, the gratuity, the identity of the Vincentian mission are studied. All the while, in all these dimensions, the mystical horizon which gave direction to the soul and the heart of the Founder is always in focus.” (Cf. Introduction of the author, pp.13-14).

## **SAN VINCENZO DE' PAOLI**

### **Opere**

1: Corrispondenza (1607-1639)

Published by CLV-Edizione Vincenziane, Roma, 2001

Recently, the first volume of the correspondence and writings of St. Vincent de Paul in Italian was published. The basic text for this translation is the “Opera Omnia” (Saint Vincent de Paul, Correspondance-Entretiens-Documents) published between the years 1921-1922 by Pierre Coste, C.M. (Librairie Lecoffre-Gabalda Editor, Paris), which in recent years has been enriched with the discovery of new letters and texts which have been integrated into the present Italian edition. The work, under the direction of Frs. Erminio Antonello, C.M. and Luigi Mezzadri, C.M. and with the help of the Italian provinces of the C.M. and the Daughters of Charity, is projected to be published in 12 volumes.

## **ALBERTO VERNASCHI, C.M.**

### **... Per chiostro le vie della città**

*L'identità di ieri e di sempre delle Figlie della Carità*

Published by CLV – Edizioni Vincenziane, Roma, 2001, 141pages

“Fr. Vernaschi succeeds in situating the secularity of the Company as an important element within the entire framework of its identity. Faced with the task of revising the Constitutions, this book hopes to provide a timely collaboration, offered by a brother in St. Vincent who knows, loves and serves the Daughters of Charity, so that the work in which they are involved will be crowned with success.

The identity of the Company has been preserved throughout the four centuries of its existence. It remained faithful to the spirit and end of its founders' original project through the various changes which took place. Now, as the Company is seeking to renew itself and to express this same fidelity in today's culture, Fr. Vernaschi calls to mind that secularity is a characteristic of its

identity.” (Cf. Presentation, by Fernando Quintano, C.M., Director General of the Daughters of Charity, p. 6).

**SRHOLEC ANTON**

**Light from the Depths of Jáchymov Concentration Camps**

Published and printed by Michal Vaško, Ružova st. 22, Presov, Slovakia, 1996,  
197pages (Translation by Maria Horvathova)

This book tells of the persecution of the Church in Slovakia and Bohemia during the socialist period. The book also recounts the life of Jan Havlik, a student of the Congregation of the Mission who spent 11 years in prison. One year after his release, he died from the illness contracted in prison. He was 37 years old. This book is dedicated to the memory of this confessor of the faith.

**EUGÈNE POULIN, C.M.**

**La maison de la Sainte Vierge**

*La vraie histoire de sa decouverte*

Istanbul, 1999, 231 pages

Fr. Eugène Poulin (1843-1920), a French Vincentian, was the principal of Sacred Heart School in Smyrna, which today is Izmir (Turkey). In 1891, he took part, along with his confrere, Fr. Jung, in seeking and finding, in the upper part of Ephesus, the house where the Virgin Mary lived at the end of her life. Tradition has it that the mother of Jesus followed the Apostle John into Asia Minor. His tomb stands at the entrance to Ephesus. This publication reproduces Fr. Poulin’s notebooks relative to the discovery and to his efforts at demonstrating its historic value. The chapel of Meryem Ana is today a pilgrimage site, which Popes Paul VI and John Paul II visited.

(Yves Danjou, C.M.)

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