

Letter of the Superior General on Communications

Rome, 25 August 2011

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your heart now and forever!

The vision of the 2010 General Assembly aims to serve the marginalized more effectively in the next six years. Last January, I asked each confrere to reflect on preparing to minister in a digital world with all its new opportunities and challenges. In this letter, I offer you the reflections of the Curia on these issues and some of the actions we are undertaking.

Just as last century's missionaries began to use automobiles for pastoral work and telephone to maintain communication, today's technology can enhance and improve how we minister. Technology, be it new hardware, software, video-conferencing, E-mail, voicemail, texting, social networking, and other new digital frontiers; all can be utilized as tools to advance the mission of the Church and the apostolates of our congregation. Properly understood, technology today can help us to assess what we do and how we can do it better.

There are ways that community leadership on the international, provincial, and local levels can use technology to enhance administrative practices and improve communication. In this letter, I would like to focus on one specific area: our web site, www.cmgglobal.org. It is the desire of the Curia that this web site play a key role in coming years as a significant resource for ministry. To this end, we are asking Fr. John Maher, our new Director of Communications, together with his assistant Fr. Juventino Castillero, to work with Fr. John Freund to develop this web site as a major vehicle for information and communication. Their focus will be three-fold:

- 1. News.** In addition to official documents, www.cmglobal.org will offer expanded news section to foster an international vision and sense of belonging among confreres and provinces, and to the wider Vincentian Family. Our vision, as expressed in the General Assembly's *Creative Fidelity for Mission* calls us to "foster theological reflection on the challenges and good that arise from sharing our charism with the laity" (III, 3.3., p. 4).
- 2. Resources for ministry and formation:** It is our plan to make www.cmglobal.org a "virtual Vincentian library" without the traditional limits of borders or buildings. Thus, it will be available for use in formation programs world-wide. This central digital resource will identify and provide links to key Vincentian resources in multiple languages. Formation programs, both initial and on-going, will have on-line access to quality resources to educate all learners about specific areas of Vincentian concern, including our charism, theology, missionary theory and practice, and systemic change. Furthermore, as part of the revision of our *Rationis Formationis* undertaken by Fr. Stanislav Zontak, Assistant General, formation programs at all levels will be required to address both the personal use of technology and its prudent and effective use in ministry. Such formation will include an analysis of the strengths and challenges digital technology offers confreres in ministry. As our *Ratio Studiorum for Missions* stresses the need for enculturation (cf. Ch. 2), digital technology provides exciting, new ways to understand "enculturation" in today's world. Our missionaries have always endeavored to learn the language and customs of the people they served. Today is no different, and digital technology can be a vibrant partner for mission, formation, and enculturation.
- 3. Collaboration:** During this administration, we will identify confreres in our major language groups who are currently involved in the use of technology for ministry and have interest and desire for further training. Our web site, www.cmglobal.org the on-line source for formation, will devote significant space to resources for formation and ministry, including the promotion of systemic change and the tools necessary for its effective utilization. It is our hope this web site will also assist provinces with technical assistance when possible, and provide access to secure video conferencing facilities to save time and money involved in meetings at the international and provincial levels.

Our web site, www.cmglobal.org will also provide opportunities for the sharing of information and dialogue with members of the wider Vincentian Family. As "*Creative Fidelity for the Mission*" reminds

us, with the laity, we will “commit ourselves to work in the evangelization of the poor together with members of the Vincentian Family” (III, 3.5.).

Web sites provide digital access to today’s “global village” and tools for collaboration. They also offer wonderful opportunities to tell the stories of the people we serve, something Vincent did so well. These stories in turn attract others to their service. In this digital age, let us pray we may support and encourage one another to learn new, exciting ways to serve God’s people and to deepen our understanding of our Vincentian charism.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M.". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the initials "G.G." at the beginning and the "C.M." at the end.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General