

Highlights of March 2012 Tempo Forte Meeting

My dear confreres,

May the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts now and forever!

Our first Tempo Forte meeting of 2012 was held at the General Curia in Rome from March 5-9. I am happy to share with you the highlights of our discussions.

ONGOING FORMATION

Our ongoing formation session for this Tempo Forte was dedicated to a two and one-half hour discussion with the members of the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change. We dialogued with them to discern next steps to promote and raise consciousness regarding systemic change in the Congregation of the Mission and in the Vincentian family.

UPDATES

- *EVALUATIONS OF THE NEW VISITORS MEETING*: We discussed the New Visitors meeting held in Rome in January. With the help of participant evaluations, we decided that in the next session in 2014, we will focus on these key aspects; first, the question of authority, obedience and leadership in the Congregation; how Visitors should go about their work of animating their province; and highlighting specific, central aspects of our manual for Visitors, *Practical Guide for the Visitors*.
- *2013 INTERNATIONAL VISITORS MEETING IN NEW YORK*: We met with the Preparatory Commission for the 2013 International Visitors Meeting at the start of the week and twice later in the week to firm up the program. It will be held July 1-14, 2013 at St. John's University, Queens, NY, USA. The theme will be "*Lines of Action in Action*" from 2010 General Assembly. The Council thanks the Province of Philadelphia (Eastern, USA);

its Visitor, Fr. Michael J. Carroll; and President of St. John's University, Fr. Donald J. Harrington, for not only hosting this meeting, but for graciously covering all expenses associated with it. The Curia will assume pre-preparation costs. Visitors attending will be responsible for their own transportation.

- *CONFRERES IN DIFFICULTY*: We reviewed a proposal by our confrere Abdo Eid, which we will discuss at the International Visitors Meeting in 2013.
- *NEW FOUNDATION*: Fr. Giuseppe Turati, Secretary General, Fr. Alfredo Baccera, Archivist, and Fr. Giuseppe Carulli, house Superior presented us with a proposal to create a foundation working in tandem with the Vincentian Solidarity Office to fund raise in Europe for International Missions and other social, charitable projects.
- *ON-LINE CATALOGUE*: We were able to view an on-line presentation of the new catalogue, still in development, and we made suggestions for its improvement.
- *PORTABLE TRANSLATION SYSTEM*: We studied the possibility of purchasing a portable simultaneous translation system. For now, we will rent rather than purchase such a system for international gatherings.
- *CM HISTORY PROJECT*: We reviewed a report we had received from Fr. John Rybolt on the status of the project he has undertaken to write a history of the Congregation. The process has been slowed down due to some research obstacles, but Fr. Rybolt continues to make progress toward the goal of eventual publication and distribution of this much-needed work to the world-wide Congregation.

GENERAL CURIA

1. *OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS REPORT*: We received a detailed report from Fr. John Maher the Director of Communications. Based on that report, we made the following decision: due to the rising cost of paper, printing and postage, we have reluctantly decided to raise the cost of a subscription to *Vincentiana* to 55 Euro in order to reduce deficits. With regard to the web page www.cmglobal.org, we had the good news of Fr. Cesar Chavez from the Province of Peru will be working with Fr. John Freund, our web master, to provide an up to date version of this web site for Spanish speaking confreres. We're hoping to do the same with the help of a French-speaking confrere, and we hope to have an announcement soon. We did an evaluation of the recent S.I.E.V. colloquium held at All Hallows in Dublin February 6-10

on the relationship between an academic study of spirituality and Vincentian spirituality. The Superior General and Council noted with dismay the low number of confreres who participated. A full evaluation and discussion of this colloquium will be forthcoming.

2. *NGO: UN REPORT*: With regard to the report we received from Fr. Joseph Foley, our NGO representative at the United Nations, we decided in the name of the Congregation to sign onto a social protection motion promoting a new article in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to guarantee Social Security for all people.

3. *CIF REPORT*: After twenty years of existence, we see the need to make an in-depth evaluation of the C.I.F. Our hope is that as a result of this evaluation, we might be able to increase the number of seminars we offer at C.I.F. and not only for the CM, but also for other members of the Vincentian Family.

4. *VSO REPORT*: We reviewed the Vincentian Solidarity Office report from Fr. Miles Heinen, Director. Be sure to read the VSO March bulletin, which can be found on-line at: <http://cmglobal.org/vso-en/>.

5. *ECONOME GENERAL REPORT*: Prior to Tempo Forte, Fr. Geders hosted the Finance Committee for a joint meeting with the Council. A decision made was that prior to the canonical visits, the Assistants General will request the provinces fund the cost of travel to help contain expenses incurred in the operation of the General Curia.

6. *INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS*: We discussed reports received regarding the various international missions of the Congregation.

- For the mission in **Bolivia**, in both El Alto and Cochabamba, Assistant General Fr. Ellie Chaves will be doing a canonical visit to these two places in March. One aspect of his visit with the confreres will be to solidify our contracts with the Bishops of both regions.
- In the mission of **Papua New Guinea**, we reviewed the report given by the Superior General after his visit to PNG. Justin Eke (Nigeria) will be taking a sabbatical in order to further his studies. We also studied our contract and the Diocese of Alotau, whose bishop is our confrere Rolly Santos. We are extending the mission in PNG, and are in dialogue with confreres who could possibly be assigned to the above diocese.
- In the mission of the **Solomon Islands**, we also reviewed the report given by the Superior General after his canonical visit. Our hope is to reinforce both this mission, as well as all international missions with new volunteers from other provinces. We have designated Fr. Joseph Mangaly, a confrere from the Province of Northern India to this mission.

- The two missionaries assigned to our mission in **Angola** have arrived: Fr. Jose Maria Nieto, from the Province of Madrid, and Fr. M. Jose Ramirez, from the Province of Mexico. Fr. Henry Kristen will be assigned there after he finishes as assistant director of the internal seminary in Santo Domingo. Also, we have received economic support for this mission from two provinces in the Congregation; that assistance will be matched by a donor.
- In the mission of **Tunis**, we reviewed their contract, as it is near the end of its one-year term. We will be seeking a new missionary to assist Fr. Firmin Mbala, as Br. Henry Escurel will return to his Province of the Philippines. I take this opportunity to thank Br. Henry for the service he has rendered for this mission. We are now in discussion of a possible replacement for him.
- We discussed the mission in **Chad**, staffed by confreres from COVIAM. The pastoral team there is now complete and the superior is Fr. R. Alexander Ramilijaona, who recently arrived. Fr. Albert Atchingkitkil is the pastor and is assisted by the other two confreres. The community treasurer is Fr. Sunday Ugwu O., a confrere from Nigeria. The overall coordinator for this mission is Fr. Guillaume Leukeumo, President of COVIAM, who reports directly to the Superior General and the Council.
- We have received an offer from a confrere responding to my mission appeal letter in October to assist the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, who have a mission in Benin. That matter is currently under discussion with his Visitor.

7. **MISSION DISTRIBUTION FUND:** We received a report from Fr. Varghese Thottamkara, Assistant General, who coordinates the mission distribution fund. Included in this list for the current year will be the Province of Portugal and the new Vice-Province of Vietnam. Bishop Rolly Santos, as a part of the list of Vincentian appointed bishops, will receive an offering from the Congregation.

8. **MISSION REQUEST FROM RWANDA-BURUNDI:** We studied a request from a group of Sisters from Rwanda-Burundi who are founding an institute of religious brothers for their congregation. They requested help from our Congregation to assist in the formation of these new members. The name of the community is **Abizermarija**.

9. **VINCENTIAN FAMILY REPORT:**

- We received a report on the Vincentian Family from Fr. Eli Chaves, Assistant General liaison.
- We will soon be looking to name a new National Director and Sub-Director for the International Association of the Miraculous Medal to replace Fr. Enrique Rivas, who has served faithfully as National Director and Sub-Director. We offer sincere thanks to

Fr. Enrique for his generous leadership in promoting devotion to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

- We received a request from the Secretariat of the Vincentian Marian Youth for a contribution of their annual budget for the International Secretariat.
- We received a report from Fr. Jean-Pierre Mangulu, delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family in Haiti. We encouraged him to actively promote the *Zafen* project for the well-being of the people of Haiti.

10. *CONFERENCES OF VISITORS & PROVINCES:*

- Fr. Eli Chaves spoke of the program for formation most recently held in Columbia sponsored by *CLAPVI*.
- Fr. Varghese Thottamkara recently participated in the yearly assembly of *APVC*. In February, a number of Visitors from Asian provinces were present when the region of Vietnam was raised to a Vice-Province.
- Fr. Javier Alvarez and Fr. Stanislav Zontac reported on the upcoming meeting of the Conference of Visitors from Europe (*CEVIM*). The theme of their next assembly in April will be "New Evangelization".
- The next meeting of Visitors and regional superiors in Africa (*COVIAM*) will be held in Tanzania.

CALENDARS

We discussed our schedules for the next few months until the June Tempo Forte meeting. The Superior general will be in the USA with the Hispanic community in South Carolina for Holy Week. He will spend Easter week in Canada at a gathering of the Vincentian Family, and then he will head to Brazil for a meeting of the entire Vincentian Family of Latin America.

Following that trip, he will begin a trip from April 25 - May 13 through all the missions of the confreres and Daughters of Charity in Central America and Panama as their provinces celebrate 150th years of service. In May, the Superior General will participate in the meeting of the Visitatrixes of the Daughters of Charity, and at the end of May, he will attend the meeting of the Union of Superiors General in Rome.

In June, after Tempo Forte, he will visit the mission of the Slovenian Sisters of the Miraculous Medal in Benin and a community of Daughters of Charity in Guinea Equatorial. At the end of June, he will visit Lebanon with the Commission for Vincentian Family leaders.

I hope this letter gives you a fuller picture of the goings-on here in Rome at the General Curia. Please keep the work of the General Curia in your prayers!

Your brother in St. Vincent,

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

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General