

FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Tempo Forte Meeting Summary

March 2013

Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be forever in our hearts!

The following is a summary of the Tempo Forte meeting held at the General Curia from March 3-8. On Sunday March 3, prior to the actual start of the meeting, we had a day of prayer and reflection given by Fr. Robert Maloney, who spoke on the theme of "New Evangelization and our Vincentian charism". He was also present a report from the Franz Foundation. We also welcomed Frs. Dan Borlik and Marcelo Manimtim, the Directors of the CIF Program in Paris, who came to update us on this most important ongoing formation program of the Congregation.

Upcoming events

- We discussed an invitation to participate in the meeting of the Society St. Vincent de Paul by sending confreres from the Curia to assisting them by celebrating the Eucharist with them at their annual meeting in Rome early in June.
- We continued our preparation for the International Visitors Meeting to be held in New York at St. John's University from 30 June - 13 July. We approved a new logo devised for this meeting by Alexis Cerquera Trujillo of the Province of Paris.
- We established the date for the meeting and workshop for new Visitors, which will be held in Rome from January 5-15, 2014.

News briefs

- Fr. Eli Chaves gave us a summary of the most recently held Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family leadership.
- We received a report from Fr. John Rybolt on his labors with the Vincentian history project, namely, the six-volume work he has undertaken. It is well underway: volumes one and two have been published; volumes three, four, and five have been written, and are being edited; and volume six is in its final draft before being sent for editing.
- In regard to the online catalog, we reviewed some concerns from one of the provinces regarding security and were assured by Fr. John Freund that the system will be very secure. The project is reaching its completion, and we hope to have it activated soon.
- We received a report from the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change, under the guidance of Fr. Robert Maloney. The new coordinator in 2014 will be Fr. Giuseppe Turati. Present at the most recent workshop in India was Frs. Maloney, Turati, and Zeracristos, with confreres, Daughters of Charity, and eighteen different branches of the Vincentian Family.
- We studied materials for the revised “Ratio Formationis” available from the committee, chaired by Fr. Gerard Luttenberger. It is now in the process now being translated (that is, the first chapter). Reports on this “Ratio” will be given to the Visitors at their meeting this summer in order to receive much appreciated input for the final document.
- We had a discussion on reconfiguration, having received a report from the provinces of Austria and Germany who have begun this process. We discussed the proceedings of a recent meeting of the National Conference of Visitors, USA on this matter, and reviewed the materials they presented at their meeting.
- In regard to CIF program in Paris, Frs. Dan Borlik and Marcelo Manimtim gave a report on current efforts and possible future directions for the program. At this meeting, we also approved Fr. Adam Bandura of the Province of Poland as an Assistant Director. He will work closely with the current directors. His appointment is effective in June, 2013.
- We studied the possible formation of a Vincentian Justice and Peace Commission, but due to concerns over available personnel and creating another structure, we did not move the proposal forward, and will continue to study possibilities. We encourage confreres to be actively involved in justice and peace commissions

of their dioceses and regions. Fr. Zeracristos, Assistant General serves on the justice and peace council of the Union of Superiors General in Rome. He was assisted by Fr. Alfredo Becerra, former Curia archivist.

- We studied economic matters, reviewing the different budgets from the international missions, and discussing provinces that are eligible for the mission distribution fund.

Franz Foundation

We had a report from the Franz Foundation under the direction of its new president, Fr. Robert Maloney. He spoke to us of the fundamental values of the Foundation, which has been very generous in supporting the many projects of the Congregation of the Mission. A number of new proposals have been put forth which we will study in the General Council. They include matters such as possible startup grants for provinces to help them become self sustainable; the formation of an emergency-response team for situations around the world; a means to support and empower Vincentian missionary parishes with start-up funding for new projects. These and other matters were presented to Fr. Maloney as President for consideration by the Foundation.

Office of Communications

We had a report from Fr. John Maher, Director of Communications.

The "CM-Global" website, that is, the international website for the Congregation, is well underway in its new form. It debuted on January 25, in the three official languages, with expanded content and easier navigation through the site. We decided to include the videos shown at the 2010 General Assembly "Listening to the Cry of the Poor". With regard to Vincentiana, we confronted the ongoing problem of finding translators, particularly in the French language. A possible solution and has been presented to the French-speaking Visitors for their input.

Fr. Maher also gave us a report on the 4 February meeting of the SIEV Board which he chairs. We heard of their plans to strengthen SIEV by seeking input from the Visitors at their July meeting. We also joined the SIEV Board in thanking Fr. Jose Carlos Fonsatti for his years of faithful service on the board when he served in Paris at the CIF program. Now that he has returned home to his native Brazil, we wish him well and are glad to know he is still available to consult with SIEV when needed.

It was proposed to the General Council that they offer quarterly reflections on our Constitutions, which Fr. Maher will then publish in *Vincentiana* and on the "CM-Global" web site. The new feature will be called "Meditation Moment", and it is hoped it will lead to dialogue and a fuller understanding among confreres of our Constitutions. The first theme of this meditation will be on "our vocation" (Part I, Nos. 1-9, Constitutions). Fr. Javier Alvarez will coordinate the compilation of ideas from the Council.

The Curia also approved in principle a workshop on the vital role communications plays in the life and ministries of the Congregation. It will focus on both a theoretical and practical point of view which will be presented to the General Curia. Fr. Maher will coordinate this workshop, which will be held in October.

International Missions & Mission Volunteers

We discussed the international missions, having received the reports from the El Alto, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. The Solomons recently saw three members of that mission returned to their home provinces. In addition, two other confreres will leave this mission to return to their home provinces this year, so we are in urgent need of volunteers for the mission to work in the seminary and parish apostolates.

We received a report from a new mission in Angola that it is going well, and a third confrere, Fr. Jason Cristian Soto Herrera from the Province of Central American was named to accompany Frs. José Maria Nieto and Ramírez Martínez, the two confreres who serve there. We discussed the possibility of a confrere to accompany Fr. Mbalo Firmin, our confrere in Tunis. We named a third confrere, Fr. Jaroslaw Lawrenz, from the Province of New England to our mission in Benin, which at present has Frs. Rafal and Stanislaus, who are from the Province of Poland. Fr. Stephen Cantwell of the Eastern Province, USA has volunteered to serve in the Province of Puerto Rico and will begin in September. We received requests from four confreres interested in the possibility of serving in the international missions. Their requests are under consideration

New "ONLUS" and VSO

We approved development of ONLUS, a European version of an NGO, and it will be established in Italy. We've asked Fr. Giuseppe Carulli to be the Executive Secretary of this ONLUS, which will serve as a complementary program to the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)

which is under the direction of Fr. Miles Heinen. We received a report from Miles on the VSO, and he noted they are having a difficult time awarding micro-grants for projects in emerging provinces because of insufficient funds. Projects they fund are usually around \$5000 USD.

Visitors' Conference Meetings

The Superior General gave a brief report on his meeting with the National Conference of Visitors of the United States which he attended in this most recent visitation of the Western Province, USA. He spoke to them about various issues, including reconfiguration, collaboration, different levels in pastoral formation; the history project; and the translation project of the letters St. Vincent which is coming to completion.

We had a report from Fr. Varghese Thottamkara, Assistant General who is liaison with the Conference of Visitors in Asia (APVC). He mentioned they are sponsoring two seminars: one for confreres under five years of ordination; and a workshop on deepening our appreciation of the meaning of the Year of Faith. We received a report from the Visitor's Conference of Europe (CEVIM) regarding their meeting was recently held in Piacenza. Among the topics for discussion was the year of faith and new evangelization, along with the challenge of the transmission of faith in our times.

From Fr. Eli Chaves, Assistant General liaison with CLAPVI, the Conference of Visitors in the Provinces of Latin America, we learned that in February, they held a school of spirituality in Curitiba, Brazil with 15 participants. With regard to COVIAM, the Conference of Visitors in Africa and Madagascar, their next meeting will be in July for formators in Kigali, Rwanda.

General Curia Administration

- We discussed the introduction of system of correspondence protocol that is sent to and from the Curia to help us better organize and access current and past documents.
- We also discussed personnel issues, specifically a replacement for Fr. Juventino Castellero, who serves as Assistant Director of Communications and the Vincentian Family. Fr. Juventino will leave his Curia post for a new mission in January, 2014.
- We discussed the question of available space for guests in the General Curia. The number of rooms has shrunk to five or six, and strategized on how we might increase them by engaging in a simple building project to add two to four new guest rooms.

Curia Calendar

We did a review of our calendars for the next three months, a review of the scheduled canonical visitations for 2013; a finalizing of the dates of our General Council meetings in 2013, and planning the dates of our Tempo Forte meetings for 2013-2014.

In these next three months, the Superior General will be conducting a parish mission in his home parish, St. Stephen's in Bradshaw, MD, as it celebrates 150 years of existence. Then, he will go directly to Bolivia to celebrate Holy Week with the Daughters of Charity, including accompanying them for their "floating boat clinic" while visiting various villages along the river. Then, he will visit the confreres of the missions in Cochabamba and El Alto.

He will then go to Paris for the renewal of the vows of the Daughters of Charity on April 8. Later in April, he will visit the Province of Poland. In May, he will visit the mission in Tanzania, sponsored by the Province of Southern India, and then go to Northern France to visit the Daughters of Charity. He will also participate in the first meeting of the "Vincentian Family Collaboration Project" to be held in May in Paris. He will attend Union of Superior Generals meeting in Rome. In June, he and the Curia will prepare for the next Tempo Forte Meeting from June 3-7. Soon after, he will travel to St. John's University in Queens, NY, to take part in the International Visitor's Meeting.

May the blessings of the suffering and risen Christ guide and strengthen you not only in these grace-filled seasons of Lent and Easter but throughout this "Year of Faith", so that like our Holy Founder, we may all be Christ to one another!

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. GREGORY GAY, C.M.
Superior General