

Tempo Forte Report

June 2013

Rome, July 2013

Dear Confreres,

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

This is a synthesis of our June 2013 Tempo Forte meeting, held at the provincial house of the Province of Naples. We greatly enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of our confreres in Naples!

Updates

- We discussed our “final preparations” for the July International Visitor’s meeting in New York at St. John’s University. Much time and preparation has gone into the planning of this event, and we are grateful to all who have worked so hard to bring it about.
- We discussed another event related to being a Visitor: the January 2014 workshop for New Visitors, which will be held in Rome, 2014. We asked Fr. Claudio Santangelo to be coordinator of this workshop. He will be assisted by Fr. Zeracristos, Assistant General. We have a number of former Visitors invited to this workshop. Some have been at re-nominated as Visitors, either in their province of origin or for other provinces, so they can share their wisdom and experience of being a Visitor for the benefit of all present.
- We submitted a proposal to the Franz Foundation for a project to transform Vincentian parishes into ‘missionary parishes’. In so doing, we hope to stimulate a deeper sense of evangelization in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul in our parishes in the Congregation.
- We then had a detailed discussion on reconfiguration being considered in the number of different provinces throughout the Congregation, including Austria and Germany, Brazil, France, Spain, and Italy, and CLAPVI-South, CLAPVI-North. Our hope is that through this process of reconfiguration, provinces may intensify their collaboration for the good of our mission. Some current examples of this include the formation of a popular mission team in the southern zone of CLAPVI (provinces of Chile, Peru, Argentina and Ecuador).

The process of reconfiguration is moving along well among three of the four provinces of Spain. In preparation, they have created commissions for new evangelization, formation, finance, juridical questions, communication, and coordination in general. Fr. Stanislav Zontak has been named to assist the three provinces of Italy as they move toward reconfiguration and eventual fusion by 2016, in time for the General Assembly.

- We formed an executive committee to move forward our European non-profit foundation (called an 'ONLUS' in Europe), and gave it a name: Vincentian Solidarity.
- We continue to move forward with implementing the on-line catalogue. We now have a contract for continual maintenance of the site, drawn up by Fr. Joe Geders, Econome General. Petter Lovaas, the professional technician from Niagara University will assume this duty. He has already contributed a great amount of time and energy to this project.
- We decided to begin the remote preparations to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation in 2017.
- The Superior General gave an update on the recent meeting of the Union of Superior Generals (held twice yearly) which discussed the theme of authority and obedience since the time of Vatican II until today. Fr. Javier Alvarez is now a member of their theological commission, which is planning to organize a Congress of Religious Life in 2015.

News & Reports of the General Curia

- The Superior General and the General Council have named Father Jorge Luis Rodriguez Baquero as sub-director for communications and the Vincentian Family. Fr. Rodriguez is from the Province of Columbia. Fr. Rodriguez will be replacing Fr. Juventino Castellero, who will move on to a new mission when he finishes his time in the Curia in early 2014.
- We also formerly approved naming Fr. Shijo Kanjirathamkunnel as both Procurator and Postulator General for the Congregation. Fr. Shijo will replace Fr. Albert Vernaschi as Procurator General, and Fr. Luigi Mezzadri as Postulator General. I wish to thank both Fathers Vernaschi and Mezzadri for their most generous service to the Congregation.
- I also wish to take this opportunity to thank Fr. Felix Alvarez, who has been a member of our community at the Curia, working as a translator for our offices and publications, and also generously serv-

ing as assistant house superior. Fr. Felix will return to his Province of Madrid. However, he has agreed to continue as a translator, for which I am grateful.

- A meeting in 2014 being planned between the General Councils of the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission. This will mark the first time in the history of our two communities that a formal meeting such as this will be held. It is our hope this meeting will reinforce our mutual responsibilities to one another and help us to witness to our Vincentian charism for the other branches and members of the Vincentian Family.

Office of Communications

- We received a report from Fr. John Maher, Director of Communications. Among other things, he reported that there will be a daily report on the proceedings of the International Visitors Meeting in New York via the website of the Congregation: www.cmglobal.org. In addition to daily updates, confreres can participate in an on-line forum to react and discuss in “real time” the different topics discussed by the Visitors at the meeting.
- The Director of Communications also presented several ideas on ways to continue to improve NUNTIA and Vincentiana. A new feature called “Meditation Moment” in which the General Council shares their ideas on the meaning of sections of the Constitutions for the benefit of confreres. The first meditation will be on the chapter on Vocation, nos. 1-9.
- Fr. John Maher will present sessions entitled “Communication in the Congregation” at the International Visitors meeting. He will also make a presentation on SIEV; its goals, objectives and activities, asking Visitors to assess how it can serve the needs of their provinces. He will invite Visitors to evaluate the Strategic Communication Plan, which put the General Assembly’s “Lines of Action” into yearly themes with specific strategies.

CIF Program Paris

- We received a report on the Center for International Formation from co-directors, Fathers Dan-Paul Borlik and Marcelo Manimtim. Since Fr. Marcelo will leave at the end of 2013, we officially approved Fr. Borlik as the new Director, and Fr. Adam Bandura, Province of Poland as the Assistant Director. Both appointments will take effect in January, 2014.

Wise Money Management Workshop

- Also, while we are still finalizing the plans for the August “Wise Money Management Workshop” in Paris, we are also looking ahead. We discussed possible international and regional meetings as a follow-up. It is hoped that planning for follow-up will concretize matters discussed in this workshop, specifically to help provinces improve their ability to write grants and develop funding for projects of evangelization and social development.

VSO

- We received a report on the Vincentian Solidarity Office from Fr. Miles Heinen with an in-depth self-evaluation. We are reviewing their report. As always, your support of the VSO is essential to help them continue to assist our provinces most in need.

Economic matters

- We discussed a plan to re-align the mission distribution fund, in an ongoing effort to deal with our limited resources and to help provinces adjust to the economic crisis. As for the realignment, we made a reduction in funds awarded, and had to reduce the number of provinces receiving funding. Our aim is to be just and fair while assisting those most in need. We will seek the help of other provinces to move them toward self-sufficiency.

International Missions

- As part of our ongoing formation, we did a study and renovation of the statutes of our International Missions of the Congregation. Once finalized, they will be sent out to encourage confreres to respond to volunteering for the international missions.
- We received good news from our international mission in **Cochabamba**: finally, the parochial house has been completed. Now, after three years, the confreres finally have their own house to call home, and so the three confreres in this mission can concentrate on the mission which has been entrusted to them.
- In their international mission in **Papua New Guinea**, we were asked by the Archdiocese of Bomana to provide a Rector for the diocesan seminary. I am happy to report that we have assigned Father Jacek Tendej, Province of Poland, who is experienced in seminary work.

Once he arrives, he will adjust to Papua New Guinea and the seminary, joining our confrere, Father Emmanuel Lapaz, who continues there.

- Our confrere, Bishop Rolly Santos of the Diocese of Alotau-Sideia, has informed us that a second member of the Congregation has joined Father Homero. He is Fr. Marceliano Oabel, a former director of the internal seminary for the Province of the Philippines.
- From the Solomon Islands, we have named Father Jose Manjaly of the Province of India-South as the new mission superior. Fr. Tewolde Teclmicael, Province of Eritrea, is to be named the new rector of the seminary. Fr. Greg Walsh, former superior the mission told us of the good work and generous service provided by Polona Berlec, a lay missionary.
- With regard to our international mission in Angola, the new missionary to join the team is Father Jason Cristan Soto Herrera, who is learning the language and applying for a visa.
- In the international mission in Tunisia, joining Fr. Firmin Mola Mbalo will be Fr. Jean-Pierre Mangulu, a confrere from the Province of Congo, former Director of the Daughters of Charity in Haiti, and liaison to the Vincentian Family there. He begins in August.
- Our new mission in the Punta Arenas Chile is underway. We receive regular updates from the mission superior, Father Pablo Vargas, together with Father Gerardo Diaz.
- In a report given by Fr. Zeracristos on COVIAM (Conference of Visitors in Africa and Madagascar), we were informed that the international mission in Chad, supported by the General Curia and COVIAM, will become the responsibility of the Visitor of Nigeria. There are two confreres in this mission; one from Madagascar, and one from Nigeria.
- We reviewed applications of confreres who volunteered for international missions. Four confreres have been assigned to these missions to begin later this year. We thank those who have volunteered, and continue to remind confreres to reflect and pray to discern if the Lord is calling them to serve in these missions, either for a period of time or longer.
- We received a request from the apostolic vicariate of Beni, Bolivia, (where the Superior General celebrated Holy Week this year), seeking three confreres for the mission: two priests and a brother. Presently, we are not able to begin another international mission, but we are evaluating if the Congregation can assist them in a temporary or partial way.

- We received a request from a Bishop of Musoma, Tanzania to send confreres to work with the Vincentian Family and Daughters of Charity in that part of Tanzania. We also received a request from a Bishop of Benin to send a fourth confrere. However, we had to ask the Bishop to promise us financial support if we succeed in finding a fourth man to go, as our budget is limited. We hope for assistance from this Bishop to assign a confrere.
- A most difficult item to get for missionaries is vehicles for transportation in rural areas where roads are so primitive. Presently, we are hoping to get a car for the missionaries in the Benin and Chad missions. This is not an easy venture: many charitable agencies are unwilling to fund such expenses. **Once again, your contributions to the VSO really count!**
- We were informed that the Province of Venezuela is hoping to sponsor a mission to be located in the Amazon region of that country. The confreres of the Province of Venezuela will invite missionaries from around the Congregation to join two of their confreres in this work. They are seeking a third confrere to assist them in this new mission.

Vincentian Family

- We received a report from Father Joe Agostino on the Vincentian Family Collaboration Project, a group that created and coordinated a week-long symposium held in Paris in May. This was a 'pilot project' with thirty-five participants from a number of countries. It was designed to promote collaboration among branches of the Vincentian Family. Being in Paris at the "cradle" of the Congregation was an added bonus for participants. At the program's end, representatives from the Congregation agreed with the Vincentian Family Collaboration Commission to continue; in fact some on the commission volunteered to do a program that will prepare Spanish and French speakers in presenting future workshops.

Visitor Conferences

- We discussed the activities of various Visitors' Conferences throughout the world. The Asia Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC) had a formation session for young confreres less than five years ordained. They have a workshop in September for formators. APVC named Varghese (Biju) Chittoparamban as new executive secretary, replacing Fr. Shijo Kanjirathamkunnel, who now serves at the Curia as Procurator and Postulator General.

- From the Conference of Visitors in Europe (CEVIM), we received information that they have decided to hold the next internal seminary program in Naples.
- In COVIAM, the conference in Africa, besides the recent decision to entrust the mission in Chad to the Province of Nigeria, they are moving forward for the creation of a major seminary for the continent of Africa.

Finally, the coming schedule of the Superior General is as follows: after the Visitors Meeting at St. John's University in July, he goes to Bello Horizonte, Brazil for the Vincentian Family Youth gathering prior to World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. In August, goes to Paris to meet with Provincial Economes and to give a talk to them as well as to speak at the "Wise Money Management" workshop. Then he vacations in the USA with his family. In September, he visits a mission in Kazakhstan of the Province of Poland, and will visit the Province of Colombia to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their foundation.

As we enter into the summer months I pray that you will find time to pray, reflect, relax, recreate so that you be may renewed in our mission to follow Christ, Evangelizer of the Poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. GREGORY GAY, C.M.
Superior General