

INTRODUCTION

Editor's Note

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The last issue of *VINCENTIANA* for 2013 provides us an opportunity to look back at not only an exciting, busy year within the Congregation, but to also reflect on an key part of our heritage as a community for mission. The benefits of the July 2013 Visitors Meeting, discussed in the last issue of *VINCENTIANA*, continue to bear fruit as several articles in this issue will attest.

For example, reconfiguration, a major thrust of the 2010 General Assembly and theme for 2013 in the strategic plan for communications, features prominently in this issue. Fathers Hans-Georg Radina and Franz Kangler, Visitors of Germany and Austria, describe how they have methodically worked at achieving reconfiguration among their two provinces, with hope of full unification in January 2015. Fathers Joaquin Gonzalez and Enrique Alagarda, Visitors of Madrid and Barcelona, two of three provinces in Spain entering into reconfiguration, share the story of how and why they and their confreres are moving forward to achieving this goal. And lest we think reconfiguration is limited to the CM, this issue highlights how Daughters of Charity in the USA have carefully managed to come together, uniting four of the five provinces into the new Province of St. Louise. Now, they are now actively planning for their future, forging new ways to serve those living in poverty, while continuing to innovate in their signature works.

The role of Vincentian Family was another major thrust of the General Assembly. This issue highlights four key reports for the Visitors Meeting on collaboration, leadership, service to the poor in India and Haiti, along with hunger initiatives. The concern of the confreres involved and their unwavering level of commitment and involvement with members of the Vincentian Family is inspiring, strengthening our goals of collaboration and empowerment for our charism.

Inspiration is another word one associates with our Founder and charism. As you read Fr. Teodoro Barquin's story of the confreres martyred in the Spanish civil war, the depth of their courage and faith is amazing and humbling. Along with over five hundred other religious, they gave their lives for the faith. The cover of *VINCENTIANA* and other reflections on them in this issue remind us of their enduring heroism, along with the company in heaven of our saints and beati.

Our newest Beati provide a fitting final tribute to this "Year of Faith". And the essay on this subject by Felix Alvarez provides some fine food

for thought and reflection. But those who also give of themselves to the Mission entrusted to the Congregation by the Church "in this life" also continue to show us a shining examples of living faith. Two such confreres come to mind. Fr. Tomaz Mavric, Visitor of the missionary Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, shares his experiences as a life-long missionary. Varghese Thottakamara, our newly ordained Bishop, reflects on his return to his missionary roots in Ethiopia. As you will read, both confreres mirror the words of Our Lord: "Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be" (Mt. 6:21).

A "true treasure" of the Congregation is our Constitutions, which seek not only to *inform* us of who we are, but to *transform* us in deepening the purpose and spirit of our life as Vincentians. With this issue of VINCENTIANA, we will begin a series of reflections on sections of our Constitutions by the Superior General and Assistants General. The year 2014 marks the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of what was called then the "New Constitutions". These reflections can help us all to ponder anew not only the document, but what it means to be a member of the Congregation today. Our focus this issue is on 'Vocation' (nos. 1-9). To get the most out of this experience, it is suggested one read the part of the Constitutions before turning to the reflection.

May the true treasures of our faith; the Lord Jesus, Our Holy Founder, our beloved brothers in community, and God's poor bless and guide us!