

2013 Mission Appeal

Rome, 1 October 2013

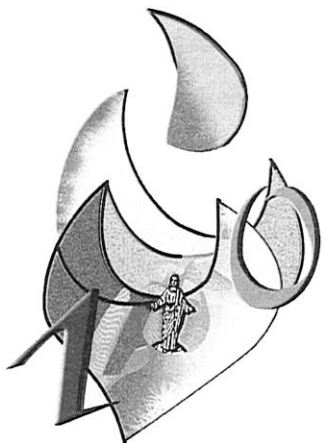
Dear Confreres,

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

As we enter October, we are reminded by the change of seasons that this once fresh New Year of 2013 is nearing its close. Indeed, both the "Year of Faith" and the annual liturgical year will soon come to an end. However, in October as we also celebrate World Mission Sunday, we are reminded to heed Jesus' call to go forth and be missionaries. At this time, we recall with awe and affection the lives of the great missionaries in our Church and Congregation. Their stories inspire us to live the mission of Jesus anew by following the way of St. Vincent de Paul.

I want to begin this 2013 Mission Appeal Letter with a missionary story, one that began 143 years ago when two confreres, true to our tradition as Vincentian missionaries, left France to go to a faraway unfamiliar place. On November 9, 1870, Fathers Gustave Foing and Augustine Rieux landed at the Port of Bonaventura in Colombia, South America and began the work of formation of the clergy and parish missions. These brave confreres were the first missionaries in what was then called the Central American Province, stretching from Guatemala to Peru.

On August 11, 1913, Fr. Antonio Fiat, Superior General, at a time of expansion, erected the Province of Colombia, separating it from the Central American Province. At the time of its creation, seven of the ten houses in the Central America Province were in Colombia. In 2013, we celebrate the most visible and lasting effect of these first efforts: the Centenary of the Province of Colombia. They who were once a mission, now send missionaries all over the world. I will say more on this later; but, inspired by their spirit, let us review our *"missions ad gentes"*.



**MISIONEROS
VICENTINOS**
C O L O M B I A

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS: CURRENT NEEDS

Papua New Guinea:

This mission continues to grow. Our confrere, Jacek Tendej from Poland, will soon arrive to be Rector of the seminary for the Archdiocese of Bomana. In addition to seminary formation work, we serve in several dioceses including Port Moresby and Alotau-Sideia, where Rolly Santos, our confrere, serves as bishop. The seminary and Theological Institute in Port Moresby are in need of confreres, as are the parishes and missions. The language is Pidgin English.

Solomon Islands:

By the end of 2013, five confreres will have left this mission to return to their native provinces. We are hoping for at least one confrere from Indonesia join in 2014. However with demands of seminary formation work and pastoral and parish ministry, we need confreres to help us continue the good work begun here. With the arrival earlier this year of Fr. Greg Cooney from Australia and Fr. Jose Manjaly from Province of India-North, they join Fr. Twolde Teclemichael, rector of the seminary in Honiara where we serve. They are also awaiting the arrival of Fr. Jeff Harvey from the Western Province, USA. The language is Pidgin English.

Benin:

One of our newest missions, this French-speaking mission is served by two Polish confreres, Rafal Brukarczyk and Stanislaw Deszcz. They have been joined by a third confrere, Jaroslaw Lawrenz, also of the Province of Poland who last served in the Province of New England. After much preparation, the confreres are well-established. They engage in pastoral ministry, assist the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, and accompany the Vincentian Family.

Punta Arenas, Chile:

This most recently established mission, currently staffed by Fr. Pablo Vargas and Fr. Gerardo Diaz, two confreres from the Province of Chile. They seek another to assist in pastoral ministry to the residents of Punta Arenas and the outlying islands city. Punta Arenas is located in the southernmost part of Chile, adjacent to Tierra del Fuego. The language spoken is Spanish.

NEW MISSIONS

Alaska, USA:

Archbishop Roger Schwietz, OMI, the Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska has requested Spanish-speaking confreres to assist in meeting the pastoral needs of the burgeoning immigrant population in that city. The Superior General and Provincial of Colombia are in discussion

with the Archdiocese about forming a contract, but other interested confreres are welcome to apply. Alaska is the northernmost of the fifty US states. The languages spoken are English and Spanish.

Beni, Bolivia:

We have received a request from a Bishop in Bolivia, Fr. Julio María Elías, OFM who heads the Apostolate Vicariate of Beni. He is requesting 3 confreres (2 priests, 1 brother) to serve a native, indigenous population who are accessible through waterways and by riverboat. The confreres in CLAPVI South are organizing a “popular mission team” to go into this area in 2015 as an interim project to determine the peoples’ spiritual needs, and future possibilities for future missionary outreach. The language spoken is Spanish.

PROVINCIAL MISSIONS: CURRENT NEEDS

Cuba:

Although in dialogue with other provinces in the Caribbean about reconfiguration, the Province of Cuba is currently experiencing a major shortage of personnel. The former Visitor, still active in the province, was seriously injured in a recent car accident. This, along with the recent departure of two confreres to their home provinces, and the transfer of another confrere to serve as Director of the Daughters of Charity in their new reconfigured Caribbean Province, have created significant staffing problems for this already small province. The language is Spanish.

Vice Province of Sts. Cyril & Methodius:

This Vice-Province has continued to evolve and grow both in numbers of native confreres from the Ukraine, and a focus on finding creative ways to meet the pastoral and material needs of the poor. With ministry in the Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, this vice-province welcomes confreres for short-term ministry as well as new members. The language is Russian.

Vice Province of Mozambique:

This Vice-Province has works for the poor along with seminary formation and a mission in South Africa. However, they are still dependent on confreres from other provinces to continue their apostolic outreach. They always welcome new members and the language is Portuguese.

Province of Hungary:

This province, while small in number, has one of the youngest groups of confreres in the Congregation. They engage in various types of pastoral work. The language is Hungarian.

Province of China:

The Province of China continues to serve the pastoral needs of the people of Taiwan and mainland China. Confreres serve in a variety of ministries, and the language is Mandarin.

Province of Paris:

The Province of Paris seeks a confrere wishing to engage in pastoral ministry for its Thessaloniki, Greece mission. It is a parish setting and involves serving several diverse language groups who worship at the parish staffed by the confreres. The language spoken is Greek.

UPDATES ON INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

The following is an update on missions we have established from past appeals. These missions are a reality today due to those who volunteered as well as your prayers and donations.

ANGOLA:

The Portuguese-speaking mission in Angola has welcomed a third confrere, Fr. Jason Cristan Soto, who is applying for a visa. He joins Frs. Jose Maria Nieto and Jose Ramirez in pastoral work and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family.

CHAD:

This French-speaking mission in Chad, sponsored by COVIAM, is under the supervision of the Visitor of Nigeria. There are two confreres now stationed there: Fr. Onyeachi Ugwu, from the Province of Nigeria, and Fr. Roch Ramilijaona from the Province of Madagascar. They would like another confrere to assist them in pastoral work and outreach to those in rural areas.

EL ALTO:

The confreres in this mission continue their parish pastoral work and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family. Fr. Aidan Rooney, mission superior, works with Frs. Cyrille Pierre De Nanteuil and Jose Diego Pla Aranda in parish and pastoral work and outreach to the indigenous peoples. They have also fostered a vibrant lay ministry program to empower the three parish centers in their care. Also noteworthy is that due to the planning and foresight of Fr. Aidan Rooney, the mission has supplemented its budget by fund-raising through the internet and by personal contacts. You may view their web site: www.vocesvicentinas.org

COCHABAMBA:

This Bolivian mission is staffed by three Bolivian confreres from the Province of Chile: David Paniagua, Jorge Manrique; and Luis Montoya. They do pastoral work in parish and mission outposts. The mission has found ways to supplement its budget and to be self-sustaining.

TUNIS:

Fr. Jean-Pierre Mangulu, a confrere from the Province of Congo has arrived to assist Fr. Firmin Mola Mbalo the mission superior. The confreres in this French and English speaking mission do parish ministry, pastoral work, and accompaniment of the Daughters of Charity.

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As you can see, the missionary spirit of the Congregation is alive and well, thanks to so many generous confreres who support the missions through volunteering, donations, and prayer. So once again I ask your support in whatever way possible. Attached to this letter, you will find a new feature by the General Council: a listing of necessary criteria to be a missionary. I urge all to read and reflect it, because Jesus and St. Vincent call us to a missionary vocation to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. There is another attachment outlining how a confrere should respond if he wishes to volunteer, along with ways to contribute funds to the VSO for micro-grants. Donations are always welcome, no matter what amount!

As noted, this year the Province of Colombia celebrates its Centenary. From a small start with two French confreres, the Province is now present in the USA, Brazil, Chile, Cuba Ecuador, Papua New Guinea, Toulouse, Rwanda and Burundi bringing Christ and our charism o wherever they are sent. Today, this Province has 25 houses, with 137 confreres and 50 seminarians. They who were once missionary territory have now become missionaries to the world! For this we rejoice, and ask the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers to the harvest.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. GREGORY GAY, C.M.
Superior General


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CRITERION FOR SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS FOR MISSION 'AD GENTES'

As the realities of life in the international missions are challenging and totally different from that of a confrere's home province, some criteria is required for selecting missionaries to serve in these places. Using the criteria below, the volunteer will be interviewed by someone from the General Council or by their representative.

1. ***Missionaries must have emotional stability.*** Missionary work is hard! Those ministering cross-culturally, if they are to be effective, must learn to speak other languages, learn new cultures, and speak God's eternal message in changing earthly contexts. Interpersonal relationships with co-workers, confreres who are also going through cultural stress and work anxiety, amplify tension. Only the emotionally stable should make the commitment for long-term, cross-cultural missions.
2. ***Missionaries must have spiritual maturity.*** They cannot effectively preach the Gospel by their own initiative and power. They are mere "jars of clay", who demonstrate that the "all-surpassing power" employed in Christian ministry is "from God and not from us" (2Cor. 4:7). Missions are thus a "supernatural work" ultimately accomplished by the power of God. Therefore, missionaries must be people who "fall on their knees before the Father" (Eph. 4:2) in prayer. They must also be committed to studying the Bible not only to prepare homilies and lessons, but also to reflect upon God's will in their own lives.
3. ***Missionaries must have an intimate relationship with God,*** one that will influence who they are and how they relate to others. They allow themselves to be increasingly transformed into God's likeness as they look upon Him (2Cor. 3:18). Their spiritual maturity should lead them to **be effective teachers of the Word of God.** Teaching a Christian worldview as revealed by God in Sacred Scripture is integral to the missionary task. Therefore, missionaries sent to foreign mission fields should be those who have taught the Gospel in their own country and culture and have empathetically nurtured the faithful to Christian maturity.
4. ***Missionaries must have the aptitude and training*** to effectively build-up churches, nurture new Christians to maturity, and equip national church leaders for Christian service. These are essential tasks of missions. This must be done taking into account the local realities. They should not transport their own cultural church to the mission, but rather allow Gospel values to be implanted in the culture of the place where they serve. Missionaries must be trained to enter new cultures and lay the foundations of the Gospel.
5. ***Missionaries must have effective interpersonal communication skills.*** These interpersonal abilities are largely formed through parental, familial and other relational influences in one's early life, and are difficult to learn as adults. Personalities are also influenced by culture, and vary by country and continent. Despite one's personality type, all missionaries must have the ability to empathetically enter into the culture where they will minister. This will also include the capacity to work and collaborate as a team.

6. *The missionaries should have a pure motive.* A missionary should develop a clear and direct motivation for evangelization, a vision for the mission, and service to the poor; always keeping in mind that all this is ultimately for the glory of God alone. The dubious motives of personal gain and vain glory will always defeat the purpose and do harm to the mission and the missionary.

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MISSION APPEAL LETTER 2013: NEXT STEPS

Information for Those Volunteering

1. After a period of serious discernment, if you feel moved to volunteer, please send your letter or e-mail to Rome by **30 November 2013** or again by **28 February 2014** so we can review requests in our *Tempo Forte* meetings of December 2013 and March 2014.
2. It is helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for all missionaries.
3. While we have no automatic age cutoff established, it is necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.
4. Confreres who volunteer should inform the Visitor in their province that they have done so. The Superior General will then dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.
5. Your letter should give some background about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests that you have, such as the mission in which you would like to take part.
6. Even if you have already written in the past, please make contact again. Experience has shown that confreres not available at one moment might be available at another time.
7. If you are unable or unavailable for the missions, we welcome your monetary contribution to represent your zeal for our missionary endeavors. Every year, many eligible provinces needing help seek a micro-project grant of \$5,000 or less from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund. These grants are awarded by the VSO quickly and with minimal paperwork. The VSO reports on the wonderful results of these grants in its quarterly bulletin (see: www.famvian.org/vso). Donations to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund are the only source of funding for the micro-project grants.

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**MAKING A CONTRIBUTION
TO THE VINCENTIAN SOLIDARITY FUND**

Provincial, House and Individual Contributions:

- Checks must be made only payable to: **"Congregazione della Missione"**. The bank will not accept any other name. They should be sent to:

**Econome General
Congregazione della Missione
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma, Italia**

- Other possibilities for bank transfers can be discussed with the Treasurer General.
- **Clearly indicate that the funds are for the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF).**

In every case:

- All gifts received will be acknowledged. (If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification.)
- Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.