

# Tempo Forte Report

October 2013

Dear Confreres,

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

Here is a synthesis of our October 2013 Tempo Forte meeting, held at the Curia in Rome.

## **Congregation-wide Updates**

We began our October 2013 Tempo Forte with an ongoing formation retreat: "Meditation Moment, taking time to reflect and dialogue on our Constitutions, in particular "Vocation" (Part 1, No. 1-9). The results of our dialogue appear in this issue of *Vincentiana*. Our goal in so doing is to spur reflection and discussion among confreres on the value of our Constitutions.

We did an evaluation of the International Visitors Meeting held in July, 2013 at St. John's University, NY. Overall, the evaluations of the participants and the General Council were very positive on all aspects of this meeting. Still, we always look for ways to improve it for next time.

We continued our planning for the meeting and workshop for New Visitors scheduled for January 2014 in Rome. An interesting phenomenon we observed when reviewing the list of attendees was that a number of confreres return as Visitors after having held this position previously, either in their own province or in another. With this dynamic, we hope to enrich our discussion on the "Practical Guide for the Visitors" with Visitors sharing their own experiences.

We also initiated the preparation for the General Assembly for 2016. A letter has been sent to the Visitors asking them to recommend members for the Preparatory Commission. We have finalized the date, and are trying to finalize a location and theme for the General Assembly.

Fr. Matthew Kallammakal, C.M., new Assistant to the Superior General, will assume the duties for coordinating the International Missions, mission distribution fund, and will be the liaison with the Asia-Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC). Fr. Matthew replaced Fr. Varghese Thotamkara, ordained a bishop for Ethiopia. Fr. Matthew arrived in September, and immediately delved into his new responsibilities, fully participating in Tempo Forte meetings.

We continued our discussion of reconfiguration on the number of provinces involved in this process at this time. As a Council, we are committed to encouraging and supporting the progress that has been made among our provinces.

With regard to the on-line catalog, a letter has been prepared for all Visitors to inform confreres how to access a temporary password which they can change once they log-in to secure both the site and user's identity.

We had a discussion regarding an idea from an incorporated member of the possibility of an international meeting of Vincentian students. We settled on a practical and less expensive proposal; namely, to invite Conferences of Visitors to have regional meetings as called for in our Constitutions. We also discussed the possibility of having representation of incorporated students at a General Assembly, but no decision has been made on that matter at this point.

It was also recommended that during gatherings of the Vincentian youth prior to World Youth Day, there be some time set aside for our Vincentian seminarians to discuss and share their own experiences at the international level.

With regard to our preparation for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Foundation of the Congregation in 2017, we will have a compendium prepared and ready for distribution at the 2016 General Assembly. This compendium will contain a summary of the Congregation's history, along with significant photos of different provinces throughout the world.

We began a discussion on how to improve the preparation of confreres going to the international missions and the formation for laity of the Vincentian Family wishing to serve in these missions. We are in dialogue with Fr. Pat McDevitt, President of All Hallows College, about developing a program coordinated by All Hallows, once a seminary that sent missionaries all over the world, and now has very well-recognized programs for lay formation.

The Visitors will receive a letter outlining creation of a center to help confreres needing vocational discernment, and to promote a deepened sense of belonging to the Congregation.

We will participate in an annual meeting of "Solidarity with Southern Sudan", sponsored by the Union of Superior Generals for institutes who send members to serve the needs of the Church in this recently-created country. Our own Fr. Manuel Ginete of the Province of the Philippines is now in Southern Sudan in this inter-congregational program.

We received an invitation from the Union of Superior Generals to maintain our presence on their Commission for Justice and Peace, which we accepted. We have asked our Procurator and Postulator General, Fr. Shijo Kanjirathamkunnel to be a member of this commission.

## General Curia News

With regard to the General Curia, we discussed a number of matters pertaining to personnel. This includes seeking a new house superior to replace Fr. Giuseppe Carulli, whose term will end this summer, and replacing the two Brothers, Ivan Hueichan Sanchez and Leopold Myamba, as their terms of service end sometime in 2014.

We had a report on the activities and progress of our communications and publications works from Fr. John Maher, director of that office. Fr. Maher held a meeting of the SIEV Commission in September. The group focused on studying the results of the survey done at the Visitors meeting on topics important for SIEV. Of concern to the SIEV Board is the need to get assistance in preparing the next generation of Vincentian researchers, writers, and translators. Plans are being made on how these goals may be achieved for the next SIEV Board meeting.

Fr. Maher reported that the Vincentiana editorial Board met in September to review the progress of the publication, and to discuss themes for the issues in 2014. After discussion with the board and General Council, the themes are: "Vincentian missionary parishes", "Formation for our Vincentian Mission: Initial Formation", "Formation for our Vincentian Mission: Ongoing Formation". The last issue will either focus on the revised *Ratio Formationis*, or SIEV symposia.

Fr. Maher also noted that the CM-Global web site has progressed well, due to the fine work of Fr. John Freund, web-master and the assistance of Frs. Bernard Massarini and Cesár "Chuno" Chávez Alva who coordinate the French and Spanish versions of the web site. There will now be a greater effort to include videos, and insure news of the Congregation is posted in a timely manner. To do that, they need the help of confreres in various provinces to forward information.

We had a report from Fr. Giuseppe Turati, the Secretary General, who also serves as the Coordinator for the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change, which held one of its two yearly meetings in Rome in October. As the Commission is transitioning to new membership, this meeting helped insure a smooth running of events.

Fr Turati also reported on a new method he initiated to better track the large amounts of correspondence in the Secretariat: a new identifying 'protocol' number for all correspondence coming in and out of the Secretariat office.

We reviewed a report from Fr. Miles Heinen, Director of Vincentian Solidarity Office. We also discussed an evaluation done of the services that office provides for the Congregation, particularly their fundraising for the growth of our patrimonial funds. I encourage all confreres to read the October bulletin of the VSO, particularly on matters dealing with the Patrimonial Fund for developing provinces to help them stabilize financially and continue to do the Mission.

We read a report from the ONLUS Commission (Vincentine Solidarity Office in Europe), which is under the responsibility of Fr. Giuseppe Carulli, serving as its first Executive Secretary.

### Financial Matters

We discussed two possible projects to be done in conjunction with the Franz Foundation: one promoting the development of Vincentian missionary parishes, and another, establishing an emergency relief action program. We discussed a proposal that we received from the Eastern Province, USA from Fr. Elmer Bauer, Provincial Econome, related to self-sustaining projects. We received our quarterly report from Fr. Joe Geders, the Econome General on our financial position to date, as well as the progress in developing a budget model for 2014.

### International Missions

We reviewed reports from our missions in *Bolivia*: El Alto and Cochabamba. As El Alto has a new bishop, we are in the process of signing a new contract. Our confrere in El Alto, Diego Jose Pla from the Province of Madrid, has renewed his contract for another three years.

We received correspondence from the mission in *Papua New Guinea*. Fr. Emmanuel Lapaz, of the Province of the Philippines has also renewed his contract. We continue to support three different areas in Papua New Guinea: in the diocese of Alotau-Sideia, where we have two confreres working with the Ordinary, our confrere Rolando Santos; in the Diocese of Bereina where the Bishop thanked the Superior General for the help of the confreres in their mission; and in the Diocese of Bomana, where Fr. Jacek Tendej is newly arrived from Poland to serve as the Rector of the diocesan seminary. We have an urgent need for more confreres to work here!

We received a report from the mission of the *Solomon Islands*. They are awaiting the arrival of two confreres to help carry out the work of this mission. As previously noted, by the end of 2013, five confreres serving there will have left and returned to their home provinces.

We discussed a report from our new mission in *Angola*: now with three confreres who are formulating their community plan after having lived together for several months.

With regard to our mission in *Tunisia*, we now have two confreres there: Frs. Firmin Mola Mbalo from the Province of Toulouse, and John-Pierre Mangulu, from the Province of Congo. We also received news that Fr. Firmin was named the diocesan director of Caritas, an international charitable organization which works under the auspices of the Diocese of Tunis.

We discussed information on the mission in *Chad*. This mission is the joint responsibility of COVIAM. Fr. Sixtus, a Visitor and member of the conference, has agreed to supervise and coordinate the mission. Presently, there are two confreres in Chad; one from Madagascar and one from Nigeria. They will soon be joined by a third confrere from Nigeria.

We reviewed a report from the three confrères in the mission in *Benin*, all of whom are from the Province of Poland.

We had a written report from the Visitor of Chile, who, with the General Curia is responsible for a new mission in *Punta Arenas, Chile*. It is currently staffed by two confrères from the province of Chile, but there is an urgent need for at least two more confreres. This was noted in last month's Mission Appeal letter. Punta Arenas is in a most Vincentian area of the world, rich in mission territory, and offers opportunities to work with the Vincentian Family.

We approved a revision of the final draft of our International Mission Statutes which will be promulgated at the December 2013 Tempo Forte. We discussed how to juridically situate the different local community houses of the International Missions, whether to have them be the responsibility of the General Curia, or of a particular province. We received a request from two bishops for missionaries, both noted in the October Mission Appeal letter, including one in the apostolic vicariate of Benin, Bolivia, which involves evangelization by riverboat. We had a number of volunteers, two of which we will assign placement in an international missions.

### **Vincentian Family News**

We had a report from Fr. Eli Chaves, Director of the Vincentian Family. He offered an evaluation of the "Wise Money Management" program sponsored by the Vincentian Family in Paris sponsored last summer. As a follow-up, we discussed the possibility of presenting another similar type program, but to do so in conjunction with a grant-writing workshop. This matter will be discussed by the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family at their next meeting.

We received a report from the Vincentian Family Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue with Islam which contained a draft of the program for their 2014 symposium to be held at DePaul University, Chicago from June 28 to July 8. Confreres and members of the Vincentian family are encouraged to attend this worthwhile conference. This is also an important event for confreres and Vincentian Family members who live and work among Muslims.

We received a request from the International Council of MISEVI for financial assistance for two upcoming activities: an international meeting in Europe in Slovakia in November. This meeting is open to all

involved and interested in MISEVI and its purpose is to promote a better understanding of MISEVI in Eastern European countries. We also approved providing financial assistance for the first General Assembly of MISEVI, to be held in Costa Rica in February 2014.

### **Visitors Conferences**

We had an extended discussion on different activities of the Conferences of Visitors and provinces. The Asia-Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC) is currently without a president and secretary. The next meeting will be held in February, 2014 in Sydney, and the Superior General will assist at that meeting. Fr. Matthew Kallammarkal will be the new liaison from the General Council to the APVC.

In terms of the Conference of European Visitors (CEVIM), we reviewed the most recent minutes from their meeting, held at St. John's University last July. We discussed establishing a new internal seminary for the Mediterranean provinces, under the responsibility of the province of Naples. The Superior general shared the reflections from the National Visitors Conference in the United States regarding their current status.

### **Calendars**

The General Council then shared their calendars for the months from October to December, including that of the Superior General.

In October, the Superior General participated in the beatification in Tarragona, Spain of the 41 martyrs of the Vincentian Family killed during the country's civil war in the 1930's. Over 500 priests, religious, and laity were beatified. From October 15-22, the General Curia made retreat together in Fasano, in southern Italy at "Trullo d'Immacolata", a retreat house run by the Daughters of Charity. The retreat ended with a pilgrimage to San Fele, birthplace of Justin de Jacobis. From October 26-30, the Superior General and Fr. Orlando Escobar, Visitor of Colombia visited Anchorage, Alaska, USA to explore beginning a new mission to Hispanics.

In November, the Superior General, joined by three other members of the Curia, will attend the MISEVI International meeting in Slovakia. Then, he makes a canonical visitation to Panama, and attends a meeting of the International Council of the Association of the Miraculous Medal. Then, he will join in a Triduum celebration of the feast of the Miraculous Medal. Then the Superior General will attend a meeting of the Union of Superior Generals held in Rome.

December 1-7 will be the quarterly Tempo Forte meeting. The Superior General and Fr. Stanislav Zontak will visit Honduras, participating in the opening of a new mission house sponsored by the Province of

Slovakia. They will participate in a meeting of Vincentian Marian Youth in Panama, including representatives from Mexico and Central America. After Christmas with confreres at the General Curia, the Superior General will go to Paris to give the annual New Year's Day conference to the Daughters of Charity as is the tradition.

As we look to the end of the calendar year on the horizon and the end of the "Year of Faith", let us continue to pray that the Lord Jesus and St. Vincent will imbue us a deeper faith in God, as we might have the courage to serve the poor with open and loving hearts.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. GREGORY GAY, C.M.  
Superior General