SUPERIORE GENERALE


MISSION APPEAL 2016

To all the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My dear confreres,

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

In this month of October, dedicated in a special way to the prayer of the Rosary and reflection and concrete actions in relation to the missions Ad Gentes, I extend to each one of you my heartfelt greetings.

1) Being missionaries is our call from the time of our Baptism, when we officially became members of the Universal Church and a mission was entrusted to each one of us.

2) Being a missionary is our identity as members of the Congregation of the Mission. We carry the name of missionaries, as the people started to call us, from the beginning of the Congregation’s foundation, which Vincent explains at the beginning of our Common Rules.

3) The recent 42nd General Assembly clearly emphasized and underlined our common desire to keep strengthening and developing our International Missions, as well as other places of mission.

4) Being open to going to new places of mission around the world is part of our basic charism.

5) This said, however, before responding to so many invitations and needs coming from around the world, we need to strengthen and reinforce some of the already opened international missions, as well as other missions.

6) Among other recommendations and petitions from the recent General Assembly was that of having good preparation for the confreres who will join the international missions and other missions.

In this regard, at our October Tempo Forte Meeting, we talked about preparing a program for the confreres to accompany them as they get ready for their service in the international
missions or other places of mission. We will start preparing this program in the coming days.

7) Responding positively to the many requests and needs around the world becomes a ground where collaboration and mutual support play a decisive role.

If two, ten, or 30 confreres go to new missions, we all, the whole Congregation, goes on a new mission with them. The confreres always come from a concrete province, vice-province, or region of the Congregation. When the confreres leave a present place of service and go to the next one, most of the time replacements for the confreres in a concrete province, vice-province, or region need to be found. Our availability to the invitation or plea of the Visitor, Vice-Visitor, or Regional Superior to accept a new service in place of the confrere or confreres who went to the new mission – although this may bring added responsibilities – becomes the concrete sign of mutual support, collaboration, and witness that all we do is our common mission, part of our common call. In this way, we can say clearly that all go to the new mission. We all respond positively to the mission appeal, those who go to the mission, as well as those who stay back and give others the opportunity to respond to the appeals we received and keep receiving.

The following are the needs in the International Missions and the Provincial Missions at the present time:

AFRICA

**International Missions:**

**Angola** – (2012). Languages: Local language and Portuguese. The confreres are involved in parish ministry and in accompanying local communities and the Vincentian Family. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Marcos Gumieiro and Jason Cristian Soto Herrera. They request the presence of more Missionaries in order to expand their missionary service.

**Benin** – (2013). Languages: Local language and French. The confreres are involved in parish ministry, assisting the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, and supporting the Vincentian Family. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Stanislaw Deszcz and Jakub Hiler. There is a need for more Missionaries. This mission is supported primarily by the Province of Poland.

**Chad** – (2012). Languages: Local language and French. It is supported by COVIAM (the Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar). The confreres are involved in parish ministry, John Paul II Minor Seminary, and teaching in school. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Roch Alexandre Ramlilaona and Sylvain Rémy Disuka at Bébalem, with a third confrere due to arrive at the end of this year; Léon Moninga Andogele and Ambrose Esigbemi Umetietie at the minor seminary. More support is needed.

**Tunisia** – (2011). Languages: Arab, French, and English. The confreres are involved in parish ministry, charitable assistance through Caritas, and ministry with the Diocesan Office of Education. Missionaries presently ministering in two missionary sites are: Narcisse Djerambete Yotobumbeti and Eric-Proper Mputu Ebengo at La Goulette; Claudio Santangelo and Fadi Bassil at Sousse. In Sousse, the parishioners are mostly retired people, expatriates, many tourists, and mixed families (Christians and Muslims).
N.B. During the 2016 General Assembly, the idea of incrementing our presence in Maghreb was discussed. In fact, the importance of our presence and mission there is to build bridges and dialogue with the Muslim community on behalf of the poor in this area. The Church in Tunis is positioned on the peripheries. It is not self-sufficient and there is no seminary to train future priests. The priests have to come from outside the country. The faithful in Tunis are composed of about 30,000 foreigners, university students, and expatriates. The majority of the population is Muslim and, as a result, there is always an environment of suspicion, indifference, and prejudice; all of which we attempt to change through the witness of our life.

Provincial Mission:

Vice-Province of Mozambique. Languages: Local language, Portuguese, and English. The members of the Vice-Province are involved in ministry with men and women in great need, in formation ministry in seminaries, and in a mission in South Africa. The Vice-Province is still dependent on Missionaries from other provinces in order to continue its ministry. They are most willing to accept new members.

AMERICA

International Missions:

Alaska, USA – (2014). Languages: English and Spanish. The confreres ministering there are serving an increasing number of Latinos, who live in the Archdiocese of Anchorage. The Missionaries presently serving there are: Andrew Bellisario, Pedro Nel Delgado Quintero, and Jesús Gabriel Medina Claros. We are in the process of assigning a new confrere to this archdiocese and to a neighboring diocese. More missionaries are needed.

Beni, Bolivia – (2016). Languages: Local language and Spanish. Two confreres are preparing to open this mission. More missionaries will be needed to strengthen the community.

Cochabamba, Bolivia – (2009). Languages: Local language and Spanish. The confreres are involved in pastoral and parish ministry. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: David Paniagua and Jorge Manrique Castro.

El Alto, Bolivia – (1994). Languages: Local language and Spanish. The confreres are involved in pastoral ministry with the indigenous peoples, which implies rural pastoral ministry and the formation of the laity. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Aidan Rooney, Cyrille de la Barre de Nanteuil, and Diego José Plá Aranda. They request the assistance of more Missionaries.

Punta Arenas, Chile – (2013). Language: Spanish. The confreres are involved in pastoral ministry. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Ángel Ignacio Garrido Santiago, Pablo Alexis Vargas Ruiz, and Margarito Martínez González. They request the support of more Missionaries.

Tefé, Brazil. Languages: Local language and Portuguese. The Prelature of Tefé, located in the heart of the Brazilian Amazon, had been entrusted to the Spiritans. Bishop Fernando Barbosa dos Santos, CM, is the fourth Bishop of Tefé and the first one who is not a member of the
Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The Prelature extends for some 264,669 square kilometers and has a population of about 238,000 inhabitants. There are ten cities, about 405 riverside communities, and 40 urban communities. There are 88 indigenous communities in 15 different villages with a total population of 8500. It is a poor missionary territory that needs more priests and evangelizers. The primary means of transportation is by boat (long hours of travel in precarious and difficult conditions).

So far, a few confreres have expressed their readiness to go to this mission, but to give serious consideration to opening it, we need more candidates.

**Provincial Mission:**
**Province of Cuba.** Language: Spanish. Even though this province is searching for a way to reconfigure itself with another province, it lacks personnel. Confreres will be welcome to minister there for either short- or long-term commitments.

**ASIA – OCEANIA**

**International Missions:**
**Solomon Islands** – (1993). Languages: English and Pidgin. The confreres are involved in formation ministry (major seminary) and rural parish ministry. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Paulus Suparmono, Antony Punning, Ricardo Pradhan, and Brian O’Sullivan. Justin Eke and Tewolde Tewolde Telemeca continue their ongoing formation. There is always a need for Missionaries to teach philosophy and/or theology. Those confreres having at least a licentiate in philosophy or theology and willing to teach will be of great service to the mission. The medium of instruction is English.

**Papua New Guinea** – (2003). Languages: English and Pidgin. The mission there includes ministry in various dioceses. In addition to formation ministry in the seminary at Port Moresby, the confreres are involved in rural parish ministry and also work at the center of missionary cultural formation. The Missionaries presently ministering there are: Homero Marín, Marceliano Oabel, Emmanuel Lapaz, Jacek Tendej, Neil Lams, Joel Bernardo Yco and Marcin Wróbel.

**Provincial Mission:**
**Province of China.** The Province of China continues to provide for the pastoral needs of the people of Taiwan and mainland China. The language is Mandarin and the confreres are involved in a variety of ministries.

I look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in volunteering for one of these missions. In the meantime, let us keep in prayer all those who evangelize in foreign lands. May we all be filled with Jesus’s Spirit as we follow in the footsteps of our holy Founder.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

Tomaž Mavrič, C.M.  
Superior General
Volunteers for the Missions Ad Gentes
Criteria for Selection

The realities of missionary life are a challenge and almost always differ from the challenges that we have to confront in our province of origin. Therefore, some criteria are needed in order to select the confreres who will minister in those places. Using the following criteria, the volunteer will be interviewed by some member of the General Council or his representative.

1. *The Missionaries ought to have emotional stability.* Missionary work is difficult! The interpersonal relationships with one’s companions in ministry, the cultural tensions, and a certain anxiety with regard to ministry, all of these increase tension. Only those persons who are emotionally stable should make a long-term commitment for mission in a different cultural context.

In order to be effective, those confreres who minister in a culture that is distinct from their own must learn another language and attain knowledge with regard to the new culture(s), so that the message of God can be proclaimed in that different and changing world context.

2. *The Missionaries ought to have a spiritual maturity.* In order to preach the gospel in an effective manner, initiative and ability are not enough. Saint Paul tells us that we are *earthen vessels* and we ought to reveal in our ministry the *surpassing power* that proceeds from God and not from us (2 Corinthians 4:7). The missions are a supernatural work, engaged in through the power of God. Therefore, missionaries ought to be people who *kneel before the Father* (Ephesians 4:2) in prayer. They ought to be people who live the word, not only in order to prepare their homilies and lessons, but also in order to reflect upon the will of God for their own lives.

3. Mindful of the local reality, *Missionaries ought to possess those qualities and be formed in a manner* that enable them to build up the Church, to form new mature Christians, and to form Church and national leaders for Christian service. Those are the essential tasks of the mission. Missionaries must avoid the temptation of transferring the culture of their church of origin to the church of their new mission. Rather they should minister in a manner that enables the gospel values to become rooted in the culture of the place where they are ministering.

4. *The Missionaries ought to be properly motivated.* Missionaries ought to develop a clear and direct motivation for evangelization, for mission, and for service on behalf of those who are poor. They should always be mindful of the fact that their ministry is exercised for the greater glory of God. Doubtful motives, such as personal gain or vainglory, always lead to failure in achieving the objective of the mission.
Information for those who wish to offer their ministry as volunteers

[1] After a period of serious discernment, if you feel moved to volunteer for the missions, please send you letter or e-mail to Rome by 25 November 2016 or again by 17 February 2017 so that we can review requests at our *Tempo Forte* meetings in December 2016 and March 2017.

[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 the missionaries.

[3] It is necessary that the Missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.

[4] Confreres who volunteer should inform their Visitor that they have done so. Later, the Superior General will dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.

[5] Your letter should give some background knowledge about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests 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.

[7] If you cannot go to the missions, we welcome your monetary contribution as a sign of your zeal for the missionary work of the Congregation. Every year, many eligible provinces needing help seek a micro-project grant of $5,000 or less from the Vincentian Solidarity Office. 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.famvin.org/vso](http://www.famvin.org/vso)).
How to make a contribution
to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund

Contributions from individuals and provincial houses

• Checks only and those checks should be made out to the Congregazione della Missione. The bank will not accept checks with any other name.

Checks should be sent to:

Treasurer General
Congregazione della Missione
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

• Other possibilities for bank transfers can be discussed with the Treasurer General.

• Clearly indicate that the funds are for the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)

In every case:

• All gifts received will be acknowledged (if your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable length of time, please contact us for clarification).

• Please inform us if you are making, as described above, any transfer of money.