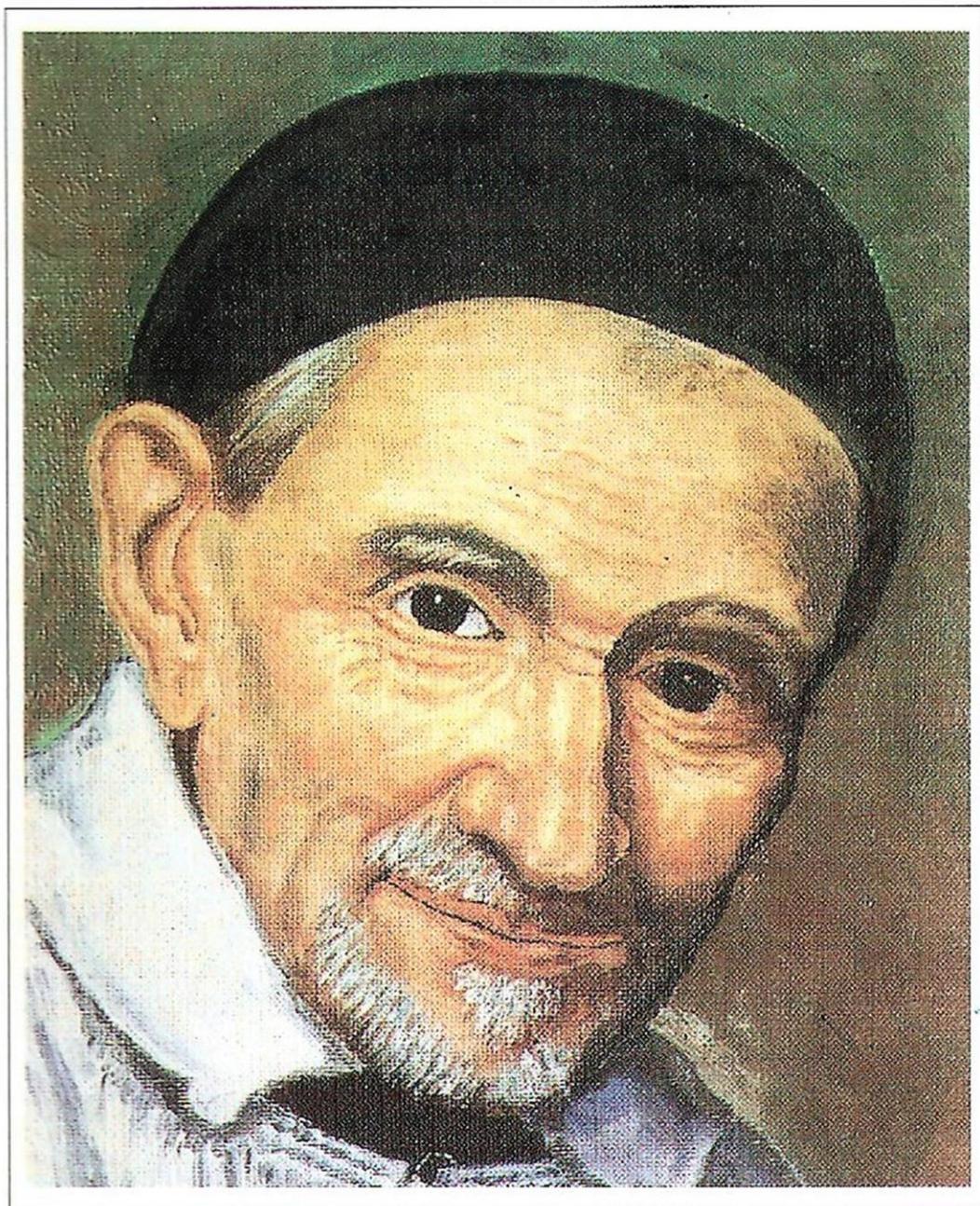


VINCENTIANA

47th YEAR - N. 5-6

SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2003



Shrines and Vincentian Mission

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

GENERAL CURIA

Holy See

Beatification of Sr. Rosalie Rendu. On 19 May 2003, the *Secretary of State of the Vatican* communicated to **Fr. Roberto D'Amico, C.M.**, the *Postulator General*, that the *Holy Father* decided that the ceremony of beatification of the Servant of God, **Sr. Rosalie Rendu, D.C. (1786-1856)**, will take place on Sunday, 9 November 2003, at *St. Peter's*, in *Rome*, together with the beatification of the Servants of God: **Luigi Maria Monti, Valentino Paquay, Bonifacia Rodríguez Castro** and **Giovanni Nepomuceno Zegrí y Moreno**.

Pontifical Ethiopian College. The *Congregation for the Oriental Churches*, in a letter dated 7 February 2003, has asked the *Congregation of the Mission* to take over the running of the *Pontifical Ethiopian College*, within *Vatican City*, for the formation of priests from Ethiopia and Eritrea. The *Superior General*, with the consent of the members of the *General Council* and after consulting the *Visitors of the Province of Ethiopia* and the *Vice-Province of St. Justin de Jacobis (Eritrea)*, in a letter dated 2 May 2003, accepted this invitation. On 16 July 2003, **Abba Berhanemeskel Keflemariam** was appointed as Rector and **Abba Hagos Hayish** was appointed as Vice-Rector/Econome/Prefect.

In questa stessa pagina se pubblicherebbe la fotografia de Suor Rosalie Rendu con la didascalia.

CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

Prot. N. 1923/02/L

*Textum anglicum orationis Collectae atque Lectionis alterius Horarum in
honorem Beati Marci Antonii Durando, presbyteri*

10 December

Blessed Mark Antony Durando, Priest

Memorial

Born in Mondovì in 1801, he entered the Congregation of the Mission and was ordained a priest. He was distinguished for his balanced and tireless zeal, especially in the preaching of missions to the people, and for his prudence and experience in serving as a spiritual guide to the clergy and the laity. He encouraged the growth of the Daughters of Charity in Italy and in 1865 founded the “Daughters of the Passion of Jesus the Nazorean,” later called simply “Nazarene Sisters.” As their own proper charism he gave them devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, and entrusted to them the assistance of the sick in their homes by day and night, as well of abandoned youth. He died in Turin on 10 December 1880.

I. MASS

PRAYER

O God, who sanctified the priest, Blessed Mark Antony Durando,
through the contemplation of the Lord’s Passion
and made him radiant with the gift of counsel
and with love of the poor and the sick,
grant that, by his intercession and example,
we may be faithful to the teachings of the Gospel,
so as to love you as your sons and daughters.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

II. LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Offices des lectures

SECOND READING

From the “Exhortations” of Blessed Mark Antony Durando
(*Archives of the House of the Mission, Turin, V, 139-140*)

It is on Calvary that saints are formed

Calvary is the mount of lovers and the open wounds of Jesus Crucified are a shelter and a dwelling place for the Lord’s doves. Whoever does not like being on Calvary or living in those wounds will never be a true lover of Jesus. If His love was such that it made Him embrace the cross and nailed Him to the hard wood, if in short He suffered and died because of the great love that He bore for each one of us, can we be indifferent to so much charity? Is it possible not to love an infinite good, a God who consumes himself out of love for us?

It is on Calvary that the holy women such as Theresa, Catherine, Agnes and so many other saints who are in heaven were formed in love. In order to speak well of the love of Jesus Christ, we would need a pen dipped in the blood of the Crucified and a heart which feels, which loves and which gives itself in sacrifice to the love and the holy will of God. But I am so far from this disposition that I find no other way out except to humble myself and recognize my own lowliness. What a crime it is not to love God who suffered and died for love of us! What a monstrosity it is to have been so many years at the school of the Crucified and not to have learned the easy lesson of love, to have preached to others the love of God and to remain insensitive and cold oneself! If I were commanded to make continuous fasts, long trips, or bodily penances, I could excuse myself by saying: I cannot. Indeed, he seeks only that we should love him; what excuse do I have for being indifferent? What command is easier, sweeter, gentler than this one?

O, pitiable me! What severe reproaches await me on the great judgment day for not having loved the most loving Father, the sincerest friend, the tenderest brother, the most beautiful and most charming spouse! What greater shame could there be than ours? We have received a heart for loving Jesus and we dare to profane and soil it by introducing love of a creature into this sanctuary! He has loved us so much and we are so cold! He does not cease to ask for our heart, and we have been so bold as to deny it to him in order to give it to a creature! With reproaches and incentives, he has invited us to love him, and we remain deaf to his invitation, drown out his reproaches and refuse to love him. Oh, how few there are who love Jesus! Many say they love him, but in fact they do not! There are some who love him on Tabor, but not on Calvary; they love him when they feel his tenderness and sense his presence, but not in times of adversity and humiliation. Oh, how few there are, even among religious persons, who truly love, with all their being, the heart of Jesus Crucified!

May God grant us the grace to be among this small number.

RESPONSORY

1 Jn 4:16, 7

We have believed in the love that God has for us. * Whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

Let us love one another, because love is of God. * Whoever remains in love...

O God, who sanctified the priest, Blessed Mark Antony Durando,
through the contemplation of the Lord's Passion
and made him radiant with the gift of counsel
and with love of the poor and the sick,
grant that, by his intercession and example,
we may be faithful to the teachings of the Gospel,
so as to love you as your sons and daughters.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ...

Rome, May 10, 2003

To the members of the Vincentian Family

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you!

We are writing to you today, as we do each year, to begin the preparation process for our annual day of prayer, held around September 27. The evaluations of this common day of prayer, which now takes place in almost all the countries where the Vincentian Family exists, have been very positive.

Last year on September 27, as you recall, we distributed the new prayer card of our Vincentian Family, encouraging our members to use this prayer often, even daily. The response has been enormous. The card has been translated into many languages. We calculate that about a million copies have been printed. It appears that, in a few places, the prayer card remains unknown. We ask you to continue distributing it and using it.

As you begin to prepare for this year's celebration, several pieces of information may be helpful to you.

1. At our annual meeting of the heads of some of the principal branches of the Vincentian Family, on February 7-9, we decided to extend for another year the campaign that we have been engaged in since September 27, 2001, entitled: "The Globalization of Charity: The Fight Against Hunger." We made this decision because the response to this campaign has been wonderfully enthusiastic. Hundreds of projects have been begun, encompassing all the continents. Information about these can be found on our web site (www.famvin.org). In this third year of the campaign, as you design further projects or modify those already being engaged in, we encourage you to accent three characteristics:
 - a. that the projects move in the direction of combatting the causes of poverty;
 - b. that, wherever possible, they involve the various branches of the Vincentian Family, working collaboratively;
 - c. that those toward whom the projects are directed (the poor) be involved in the process of designing them, carrying them out, and evaluating them.

2. This year at our meeting in February we also decided, for the first time in our history, to unite our energies as a Vincentian Family in a common “political action” aimed at the eradication of malaria. Besides affecting many members of our own Family in Africa, Asia and Latin America, malaria has devastating effects in the lives of countless others throughout the world. There are more than 300 million acute cases of malaria each year globally, resulting in more than a million deaths. About 90% of these deaths occur in Africa, mostly in young children. Malaria is Africa’s leading cause of death for those under five years of age. But it is quite possible to combat it actively, to diminish its effects gradually, and even eventually to wipe it out (a success that has already been achieved in a number of countries). What is lacking is the “political will,” and the corresponding financial support. In other words, governments often have other interests and establish other priorities for the use of their money.

The goal of a “political action” campaign is to express the views of our Vincentian Family clearly, with a united voice, to those who have power and the economic resources needed to effect a change.

In the concrete, this could mean, on an international level, that our Family would:

- ask our offices at the UN in New York and the European Community in Belgium to identify the appropriate political groups that should be contacted (the UN itself, the European Community itself, other bodies, various national governments);
- draft a united statement describing who we are and what we ask in regard to the eradication of malaria;
- send this united statement to the appropriate political bodies;
- encourage all our members to send similar statements.

On the national and local levels, in the concrete, this would mean that each branch in each country would devise its own strategy. Such strategies would be relevant even in countries that are malaria-free (e.g., the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc.), since these countries have powerful political influence and huge economic resources.

To offer further information about this “political action” to the members of our Vincentian Family and to make practical suggestions about how to engage in it, we have named a committee. Its members are: Fr. Benjamín Romo, C.M., Sr. Marie Raw, D.C., Mrs. Rosa de Lima Ramanankavana,

AIC, Mr. Marco Bétemps, SSVF, Fr. Marc-André Couture, RSVP, Edurne Urdampilleta, JMV, Mr. Ramiro Gutiérrez Ruiz, AMM, María Jesús Cuena, MISEVI. They will be in contact with you during the course of the year.

3. At the celebration of the Eucharist (or other forms of celebration) on September 27, 2003, we suggest that the theme be: HUNGER and that both the continuation of the campaign against hunger and the initiation of the new “political action” campaign against malaria be announced. For your convenience, a sheet containing some practical guidelines and suggestions is enclosed, as usual.

We encourage you to make this day of common prayer a time when our minds and hearts are united with the Lord, with each other, and with the poor whom we serve. A great English poet once wrote: “More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.” St. Vincent was deeply convinced of this. It is through prayer, he wrote, “that all good things come to us ... if we succeed in our work, it is thanks to prayer. If we do not fall into sin, it is thanks to prayer. If we remain in charity and if we are saved, all that happens thanks to God and thanks to prayer. Just as God refuses nothing to prayer, so also he grants almost nothing without prayer” (SV XI, 407).

Anne Sturm
President, AIC (founded in 1617)

Yvon Laroche, rsv
Superior General, Religious of
St. Vincent de Paul (founded in 1845)

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General, Congregation of the
Mission (founded in 1625)

Gladys Abi-Saïd
President, Vincentian
Marian Youth (founded in 1847)

Sr. Juana Elizondo, D.C.
Superior General, Daughters of
Charity (founded in 1633)

Charles Shelby, C.M.
International Coordinator of the
Miraculous Medal Association
(founded in 1909)

José Ramón Díaz Torremocha
President, St. Vincent de Paul
Society (founded in 1833)

Eva Villar
President, MISEVI
(founded in 1999)

GUIDELINES FOR SEPTEMBER 27, 2003

1. The heads of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, AIC, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, JMV, MISEVI, the Miraculous Medal Association, and the Religious of St. Vincent de Paul in each city or area should meet as soon as possible in order to begin to plan the prayer celebration. After receiving this letter, would you please contact one another by phone or other suitable means as soon as possible. To facilitate this matter, we ask the superior of the Congregation of the Mission in each area to initiate these contacts. If there are no members of the Congregation of the Mission in the area, then we ask the superior of the Daughters of Charity to be the initiator.
2. Please invite the other branches of the Vincentian Family in your area to join in this celebration (e.g., other groups of laity, sisters, brothers, or priests living in the Vincentian spirit). It is especially important that the young feel at home at our celebrations. Our gathering can be an opportune moment for them to know men and women who share St. Vincent's vision.
3. We encourage you too to provide for the participation of the poor, who evangelize us by their presence.
4. The day of prayer could include a common celebration of the Eucharist or some other communal service, according to the circumstances in each area. If a Mass is not possible, one might envision a celebration of the word, with readings, hymns, prayers, sharing of thoughts, etc. In other contexts, one could envision a "Holy Hour," with the usual liturgical actions (processions, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, readings, etc.). A sheet is attached, with suggestions concerning the theme.
5. During the celebration, the prayer of the Vincentian Family, distributed last year, could be said together. All could be encouraged to use the prayer frequently, even daily.
6. One could also organize, depending on the circumstances, a moment for ongoing formation and/or for relaxed social contact.
7. The celebration should be organized on or around September 27, in accord with what date would best promote the participation of the various members of our family. It is important that the celebration be truly communal, with the active participation of members of the various branches. A wise distribution of roles will guarantee that all groups take part.

8. Any of the readings suggested for the Mass of St. Vincent may be used (cf. Lectionary of the Congregation of the Mission), along with, if you judge it helpful, other appropriate selections from St. Vincent's writings. Much will depend on the kind of celebration that is organized in each area. A prayer of the faithful should be prepared with intentions contributed by members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family.
9. In order to raise consciousness about our annual day of prayer, about our campaign against hunger, and about the new "political action" campaign against malaria, we suggest the following:
 - a. the use of various media to publicize them: articles in the press, announcements on the radio, television, etc.
 - b. the use of our international, national, and local web pages to publicize them.
10. We hope that, around September 27, our Family in each country, might evaluate the projects that have been organized for the Campaign Against Hunger, and, if it seems opportune, initiate others, using the three criteria described above in the letter.

VINCENTIAN FAMILY DAY OF PRAYER
September 27, 2003

Suggested Theme: Hunger

We hope that some of the following information will be helpful as you prepare this day.

I. Hunger: Do we know the facts?

It is estimated that one billion people in the world suffer from hunger and malnutrition. That is roughly 100 times as many as those who actually die from these causes each year.

About 24,000 people die every day from hunger or hunger-related causes. This is down from 35,000 ten years ago, and 41,000 twenty years ago. Three-fourths of the deaths are children under the age of five.

Famine and wars cause about 10% of hunger deaths, although these tend to be the ones we hear about most often. The majority of hunger deaths are caused by chronic malnutrition. Families facing extreme poverty are simply unable to get enough food to eat.

Chronic hunger causes various illnesses:

- impaired vision
- impaired functioning of the immune system (which means increased susceptibility to disease)
- stunted growth or developmental difficulties.

II. Scripture Readings

- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Isaiah 58:5-11
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- Matthew 25:31-46

III. Healing Hunger: a two-part approach

1. *Provide food immediately.*
Hunger demands of us an immediate response, as St. Vincent and his followers often demonstrated. Without our immediate response, people starve and die.

2. Attack causes of hunger.
The number of deaths caused by starvation has decreased almost by half in the past 20 years; education points the way to ending hunger together.
- IV. This year's "political action" campaign against malaria: some information that may be helpful.
- Malaria is caused by a deadly mosquito which is becoming increasingly resistant to the drugs that combat malaria.
 - Each year there are at least 300 million acute cases of malaria globally.
 - A million people die of malaria annually.
 - Ninety percent of the deaths occur in Africa, mostly in young children.
 - Malaria is Africa's leading cause of mortality for those under five years of age.
 - Malaria-related deaths can be reduced very significantly by rather simple means:
 - ▶ insuring that people sleep under insecticide-treated nets (this can reduce, by up to one-third, the death of those under five years of age);
 - ▶ prompt recognition and effective treatment (this means that effective, affordable anti-malaria drugs must be made available to those living in malaria-affected areas).
 - Government-funded programs can reduce malaria-related deaths dramatically over a relatively brief period of time.

Originale

“Jointly Responsible for Life: Jointly Involved Against Malaria”
Political Engagement and Effective Actions

27 September 2003 – 27 September 2004

www.famvin.org

Introduction

During our meeting in Rome ... This year at our meeting in February we decided, for the first time in our history, to unite our energies as a Vincentian Family in a common **“political action”** aimed at the eradication of malaria in the world.

Some branches of the Vincentian Family making this choice are the following:

- International Association of Charities (AIC)
- Congregation of the Mission (CM)
- Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul (DC)
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP)
- Religious of St. Vincent de Paul (RSV)
- Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV)
- Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide Thouret
- Association of the Miraculous Medal (AMM)
- Lay Vincentian Missionaries (MISEVI)

Other branches of the Vincentian Family may join this team in the campaign against malaria.

All the resources of the several branches of the Vincentian Family should merge to fight this scourge through a committee appointed to publicize this campaign.

Our common slogan will be:

“Jointly responsible for life: jointly involved against Malaria”

General description of the project:

1. Purpose of this document
2. Rough description of malaria
3. Some data about the situation
4. Some ethical motivations

5. Suggested ways of involvement
6. Information and diffusion strategies
7. Planning
8. Evaluation of results
9. Web page addresses
10. Malaria commission members

1. Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to give a direction for the publicizing of the idea to all the groups of the Vincentian Family, both leaders and general members, which agree to work on this project with **political actions** and effective actions.

2. Rough description of malaria

Malaria is a disease transferred to humans by certain mosquitoes, called anopheles. This kind of disease is responsible for the death of many people. The main symptoms are: shivering, high fever and sweating, severe headache, muscle and joint pain, vomiting and diarrhea. There are several kinds of malaria, of which the most dangerous is cerebral malaria (*plasmodium falciparum*). It is important to realize that this disease can be treated successfully and that it is possible to recover and to avoid more severe consequences.

The mosquito that passes on malaria bites humans and leaves the bacterium behind that causes the disease in the victim. The mosquito bites normally happen during the evening or at night. Mosquito reproduction is based on eggs that develop in stagnant or dirty water or in very wet places and in green grass.

3. Some data about the situation

- Malaria presently affects some 90 countries, mainly the poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Malaria has terrible consequences on people: 300 million severe cases per year result in the death of some two million people each year.
- Ninety percent of the deaths are in Africa, mainly among children under the age of five.
- About 4,200 people are estimated to die every day from malaria.
- One child under age five dies every 30 seconds from malaria.
- Malaria is one of the major causes responsible of death in Africa, mainly among pregnant women and children.
- Malaria has tremendous psychological effects on survivors.

- Malaria is one of the greatest obstacles to the social and economic development in Africa, causing a net loss of about five million dollars per day.

4. Some ethical motivations

- *Everyone has the right to life, freedom and security for himself* (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 3)
- *Motherhood and infancy have the right to special cares and assistance* (*Ibid*, art 25.2).
- *Mankind has to provide children with the best for themselves* (Foreword to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959, no. 20)
- *Dear brothers and sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul: search out more than ever, with boldness, humility and skill, the causes of poverty and encourage short and long term solutions, adaptable and effective concrete solutions. By doing so, you will work for the credibility of the Gospel and of the Church* (John Paul II, to the General Assembly of the CM, 1986).

5. Suggested ways of interventions

The goal of a “**political action**” campaign is to express the views of our Vincentian Family clearly, with a united voice, to those who have power and the economic resources needed to effect a change.

5.1. Political actions

This is a more difficult task, but in the long term, it will become the most effective. Malaria can be reduced and even eliminated. We suggest here some actions to be performed at an institutional level in order that they can visualize the problem and become engaged in some projects in line with the policy of the reduction and elimination of malaria.

The above has already been accomplished in some countries or in some parts of them such as Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean.

5.1.1. Intervention of organizations and institutions

The committee named by the Vincentian Family will write a declaration and a strong appeal to international organizations like **WHO** (World Health Organization), **UNDP**, (Program of the United Nations for the Development), **UNICEF** (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund), **UNESCO**

(United Nations Education, Scientific and Culture Organization), EC (European Community), and several involved non-governmental organizations to publicize our position.

The Vincentian Family will also ask for:

- effective intervention with material, economical and scientific support in the countries affected by malaria;
- maintenance of this support to preserve future generations from this disease.

5.1.2. Education is basic for any action

Basic education is the most effective element in fighting poverty and many diseases. Some 130 million children of school age, among a total of 625 million living in developing countries, were not attending primary schools in 1988 (data from UNICEF).

Therefore, we suggest educational projects for children and adults living in the country or in the slums.

5.1.3. Sensitizing and participation

A sensitizing campaign will be promoted on the national level toward institutions, political authorities and civil society in general to invite them to be in solidarity with that portion of the population suffering more from poverty and disease.

We will ask for their commitment to preparing health projects. This campaign will require attention to mass media like newspapers, television, magazines, interviews, conferences, etc.

5.1.4. Joint efforts with public authorities

The Vincentian Family will look in any country for contribution with other organizations working for the same purpose, such as health or educational organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, etc.

Each country should have its own committee to plan the best strategy against malaria. Such a committee will define the method of activity and will establish relationships with similar social or political institutions. It will also prepare promotional material for mass media diffusion.

5.1.5. Twinning with the Family

The use of twinning will enable the support of projects in those countries that need our financial contribution or supply of medicines to achieve a more effective victory against malaria. For example, the Vincentian Family in Madagascar will prepare a project to be supported by some European country.

5.2. Effective Actions

Effective actions might be at the following levels:

- Prevention and protection against the bacteria causing the disease
- Patient care

Some suggestions for the prevention and the protection against the malaria bacteria.

5.2.1. Use of mosquito nets

The use of mosquito nets placed on windows will strongly reduce the risk of malaria. The use of a curtain at night is useful especially for children.

5.2.2. Preventive medicines

A specific treatment with suggested and approved medicines might protect people and prevent the disease or provide effective treatment in case the disease has already struck. Projects for receiving medicines from different branches of the Vincentian Family should be promoted.

5.2.3. Use of insecticides and repellent products

Insecticides and repellent products have shown good results, although it is very important to know how to use them exactly and in what conditions and areas they may be used, since they can be dangerous to health if improperly used.

5.2.4. Cleanliness around the house

The reproductive cycle of mosquitoes can be blocked by some actions like the following:

- all food containers should be kept properly covered;
- puddles of dirty or stagnant water near a house should be eliminated by filling, such as with clay;
- green grass around the house should be trimmed to avoid the reproduction by mosquitoes;
- rubbish should be carefully eliminated.

5.2.5. Personal hygiene

People should be educated to frequently wash their hands, mainly before eating and after the use of the toilet. In so doing, the transfer of many diseases, whose bacteria are invisible, will be blocked.

5.2.6. The use of bathrooms and toilets

The use of bathrooms and toilets inside each house should be promoted. This action could be part of a campaign of the local Vincentian Family or of a particular association.

5.2.7. Clean drinking water

Digging a community well: the local Vincentian Family could carry out such a project. This project might be supported by the Vincentian Family from another country.

5.2.8. Food protection

Families, and mothers in particular, should be trained to keep food protected against dust and insects. This could be part of a training and formation program for women or through the Vincentian Family project “**know how for life,**” already running in several countries.

5.2.9. Good housekeeping

A house, even if poor and simple, may be kept clean and in good order. The Vincentian Family might promote an educational campaign for women and families in the community on good order and housekeeping.

6. Strategies for diffusion of information

The definition of “what” and “how” to communicate will be the first step for the diffusion of this project. We suggest:

6.1. The national Vincentian Family committee is the proper place to think about the malaria problem. It should suggest effective projects capable of being accomplished in short, medium and long terms. These projects should be accomplished in one country or, better, together with another country needing help.

6.2. A motto or slogan will be necessary to ensure the communality and the topics of the project. We suggest something like:

“Jointly responsible for life: jointly involved against malaria”

6.3. Initiatives should be promoted for the communication campaign in order to sensitize the whole society about this project. For example, each bulletin of the several branches of the Vincentian Family should publish some articles about the project or malaria, and conferences and meetings should be organized on this subject.

6.4. Each branch of the Vincentian Family should distribute the same promotional themes about the campaign by using whatever kind of mass media is available, as well as the different communication means of the several associations like bulletins, newspaper, magazines, etc.

6.5. Each National or International meeting of the Vincentian Family should include in the related program some space dedicated to malaria.

6.6. Each national or international group of the Vincentian Family should collect data, reports on experiences, witnesses coming mainly from Vincentian Family members who worked in the affected countries, and experts in the related fields; and then forward all the material to the committees.

6.7. To diffuse the concept that malaria should not be regarded as an unavoidable disease, but that it can be eliminated if **political willingness** exists and if necessary actions are undertaken by governments, institutions and the same affected civilian society.

6.8. To be effective and unceasing in keeping contacts with the several organizations operating in the National or International environment on this subject. Lobbying them should be done to start effective projects and to obtain their support.

7. Planning

The campaign will begin on 27 September 2003 and will end on 27 September 2004.

- Six months after the start of the activities, the committee will make an investigation aimed at a sharing of experiences and at promoting twinning among countries.
- The finished plans will be sent to the committee at the end of the year in order to share the various experiences acquired by the branches of the Vincentian Family taking part in the project. These plans will be published on the web pages.

- The committee will evaluate the project or projects to be pursued by all the branches of the Vincentian Family.
- Any initiative undertaken should be drawn up on a standard project form.

8. Project Evaluation

8.1 We suggest the use of standard indicators to evaluate the different projects forwarded to the committee. These standard indicators should provide an idea of the project and the results obtained. For example, standard indicators might include:

- Types of **political actions** taken to prevent malaria;
- People who benefited from the project: children, pregnant women, the whole community, etc.;
- Amount of money collected to support the project. Medicines collected, health campaigns among the population, preventive material, etc.;
- Actions performed to sensitize the public and institutions.

8.2 The committee will send to every national committee a questionnaire in order to know the results of this campaign.

9. Information on the Web Pages

Information on malaria and related matters can be found on the following Web pages:

www.malaria.org
www.malariavaccine.org
www.mara.org.za
www.massiveeffort.org
www.paho.org

10. Malaria Commission Members

The International Heads of The Vincentian Family have named a Commission. Its task is:

- To launch the campaign
- To coordinate it
- To evaluate the projects

Its members are:

Coordinator: Marco Betemps, SSVP
marcbetemps@tiscali.it

Rosa de Lima Ramanankavana, AIC
aicmada@wanadoo.mg

Fr. Benjamín Romo, C.M.
famvin@tin.it

Sr. Marie Raw, DC
marierawdc@hotmail.com

Eduarne Urdampilleta, JMV
edurneur@mixmail.com

Ramiro Gutiérrez, AMM
medallamilagrosa@wanadoo.es

M^a Jesús Cuenca, MISEVI
chuscuenca@hotmail.com

Fr. Marc-André Couture, RSV
macouture30@hotmail.com

*“With new love let us go and take care of the service of the poor,
and seek out the poorest and most abandoned”*
(SV XI, 393, January 1657 On the love of the poor).

Rome, September 20, 2003

To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace and peace of God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

In the apparition of November 27, 1830, Catherine Labouré received a two-fold mission from the Virgin Mary: a medal was to be struck in her honor, and Catherine was to promote youth groups that would wear the medal and serve the poor. Recently, as I have spoken about the Miraculous Medal in many countries, I have been asking Vincentians, Daughters of Charity and lay leaders to work toward the spread of the Association and to focus in a renewed way on the young. The young are the Association's future; even more, they are the future of the Church. If we can help form young people to be attentive listeners to God's word, as was Mary the Mother of Jesus, and to put it into practice through concrete, effective works of charity, then we will be accomplishing an enormous service for the Church of the future.

Today I write to urge the establishment of the Association of the Miraculous Medal in those countries where it does not yet exist and also to encourage an enriched formation of its members in those countries where the Association does exist. I am attaching a list that we compiled at a recent meeting of the International Coordinating Council of the Association. On it, you will see the places where statutes have already been approved, other places where statutes are in the process of approval, and still others from which we have inquiries. If you have new names to add to this list, or corrections to suggest, please do not hesitate to contact one of the members of the International Coordinating Council: Fr. Charles Shelby (International Coordinator), Sr. Marie-Yonide Midy (from Haiti, living in Paris), Fr. Janusz Zwolinski (from Poland, living in the Congo) and Señorita Martha Tapia (from Mexico). Their pictures, areas of responsibility, and e-mail addresses are on an attached sheet.

The new web site for the International Association of the Miraculous Medal will be available online by October 1. Its address is as follows:

www.amminter.org

Every three months the International Association will publish, online, a newsletter in three languages. If you have news items that you would like to share with others, please send them directly to one of the members of the Coordinating Council or to the International Coordinator, Fr. Charles Shelby. There will also be a calendar online, into which you can insert significant events related to the Association of the Miraculous Medal in your country.

Every month, online also, you will find the outline for a catechesis or lesson-plan, which we hope will be helpful in the formation of the members of the Association. Local leaders should feel completely free to adapt it to the culture and circumstances of the place.

I am delighted that the Association is expanding rapidly at present and that so many countries have been seeking approval for National Statutes, while creating a national structure for the Association. I ask the Lord to bless its millions of members and to help our national and local leaders to accompany the members in their formation. Devotion to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church, has a special place in the Vincentian tradition. St. Vincent pointed out that she, more than all other believers, penetrated the meaning of the gospel and lived out its teaching (SV XII, 129). I am eager that we might be able to assist the members of the Miraculous Medal Association throughout the world to ponder God's word as Mary did, turn it over in their hearts, and to put it into practice, like St. Vincent, in works of effective love.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

Countries with approved National Statutes:

Austria	Peru
Chile	Spain
Congo	U.S.A. Perryville
Dominican Republic	U.S.A. Philadelphia
Mexico	U.S.A. Puerto Rico
Nigeria	Venezuela

Countries with National Statutes in the process of approval:

Argentina	Lebanon
Cameroon	Philippines
Colombia	Slovenia
Ecuador	Uganda
Guatemala	

Countries where the Association is beginning:

Angola	Indonesia
Belgium	Ireland
Benin	Madagascar
Bolivia	Mozambique
Central Africa	Nicaragua
Costa Rica	Panama
Croatia	Poland
Cuba	Portugal
El Salvador	Romania
France	Slovakia
Germany	Switzerland
Haiti	Thailand
Honduras	Vietnam
Hungary	
India	

AMM INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COUNCIL



Fr. Robert P. Maloney C.M.
Superior General Congregation of the Mission
International Director, living in Rome
@: cmcuria@tin.it



Fr. Charles Shelby, C.M.
International Coordinator, living in the USA
Animator for English-speaking countries
@: director@amm.org



Sr. Marie-Yonide Midi, D.C.
International Coordinator, living in Paris, Animator for Europe
@: ecogal9@cfdlc.org



Fr. Janusz Zwolinski C.M.
International Coordinator, living in the Congo, Animator for Africa
@: zwolinskiem@yahoo.fr



Miss Martha Tapia
From Mexico, Animator for Spanish-speaking countries
@: amm_mexico@yahoo.com.mx

Rome, October 15, 2003

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

When St. Vincent announced the opening of the mission in Madagascar, Charles Nacquart, who was 31 years of age, volunteered. On March 22, 1648, St. Vincent wrote a touching letter, accepting his offer:

The Company has cast its eyes on you, as the best offering it has, to do homage to our Sovereign Creator and to render him this service, together with another good priest of the Company. O, my more than dearest Father, what does your heart say to this news? ... You will need generosity and sublime courage. You will also need faith as great as Abraham's and the charity of St. Paul. Zeal, patience, deference, poverty, solicitude, discretion, moral integrity, and an ardent desire to be entirely consumed for God are as appropriate for you as for the great St. Francis Xavier (SV III, 278-279).

Nacquart was an extraordinary missionary. During the long voyage to Madagascar, he learned the indigenous language so well that shortly afterwards he was able to write a brief summary of Christian doctrine which was published under the title *A Small Catechism, with Morning and Evening Prayer*. He evangelized the territory around Fort Dauphin tirelessly, but died at 33 after only a year and a half on the mission. Reflecting on his death, St. Vincent exclaimed to the confreres gathered at St. Lazare:

That great servant of God! ... What a great loss ..., but also what a great gain! O, Savior! "The blood of martyrs, the seed of Christians." This leads me to hope that his martyrdom (because he died for God) will be the seed of Christians and that God, in view of his death, will give us the grace to bear fruit ... So let us ask God to give the Company this spirit, this heart, this heart which will make us go everywhere, this heart of the Son of God, the heart of Our Lord, the heart of Our Lord, the heart of Our Lord... (SV XI, 290-291).

As you have probably already guessed, today I am writing to you, as I do every October, to bring you news about the missions, where many wonderful missionaries like Charles Nacquart continue to serve, and also to appeal for your

help.

SOME BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

I have lots of good news to share with you this year.

On 13-16 February, I traveled to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, with Frs. Paul Roche and Edward Łojek. There we met with Cardinal Bačkis in order to speak about our house and church, which were confiscated by the Communist government 50 years ago. The church has now been given back to the archdiocese. Our large house there, formerly a seminary, is at present a hospital housing 200 patients. Shortly after my return to Rome, the Cardinal wrote to invite us back to our church in Vilnius. The Jesuits in Lithuania have promised to help us in working out the practicalities of reestablishing the Congregation there.

Fr. Urban Osuji, our Vice-Visitor in Nigeria, has written to tell me that the Vice-Province has accepted a new mission in Liberia. Its primary focus will be the offering of a spiritual year to seminarians who are in formation for the diocesan priesthood. The three confreres who will begin the mission next September will also, in addition to their work in the formation program, have parochial responsibilities.

Earlier this year the Congregation for the Oriental Churches asked us to take over the running of the Pontifical Ethiopian College, within Vatican City, for the formation of priests from Ethiopia and Eritrea. With the consent of the members of the General Council and after consulting the Visitors of the Province of Ethiopia and the Vice-Province of St. Justin de Jacobis, I accepted this invitation. Abba Berhanemeskel Keflemariam, from Eritrea, was appointed as Rector and Abba Hagos Hayish, from Ethiopia, was appointed as Vice-Rector/Treasurer/Prefect. A group of us, including our confrere, Archbishop Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, took part in the opening ceremonies on October 7.

The Campaign Against Hunger has given rise to a large number of creative projects, both in our mission countries and elsewhere. Almost all the countries where we serve have responded with enthusiasm to this campaign. The projects they have organized, which often involve many of the branches of our Vincentian Family, are of two types: 1) those that aim at meeting immediate needs, like breakfast programs for children on their way to school; 2) those that aim at combatting the causes of hunger, like agricultural training, animal husbandry, fish farms, and educational programs. Some of our countries where economic resources are more abundant have helped poorer countries by raising funds for projects which focus on attacking the causes of poverty. The Vincentian Family in Italy, for example, has raised more than 130,000 euros to

lay the groundwork for four projects in Africa.

This September 27th, as you already know, the Vincentian Family launched a Campaign Against Malaria, which takes the lives of so many people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Since malaria can be overcome only with massive support from governmental and other societal structures, this campaign has a political-action aspect; it also has a practical aspect, like the distribution of chemically treated mosquito nets and the setting up of educational programs. Much information about the campaign can be found on the famvin.org website.

Less officially, several of us find ourselves engaged these days in trying to facilitate cooperative efforts between the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Daughters of Charity in "Project DREAM" which is a quite successful program aimed at combatting AIDS in Mozambique, with the hope that this program will soon spread to Angola and Tanzania.

Here is some rapid news about various missions.

- **CHINA** — The situation in China is still complex, but there is considerable forward movement. Our apostolate focuses on renewing contacts, offering encouragement and formation to Chinese priests, sisters, and lay people, walking with them, and learning from them. We have found that the Vincentian charism is remarkably cross-cultural and has a special appeal to the Chinese people. While confreres continue to go back and forth to the mainland, we now, for the first time since 1950, have a rooted indigenous presence there, which is growing. We have also just been invited to staff a language and culture center, in a town where formerly we had deep roots. The sponsors are interested in offering language and cultural programs in English, French, Spanish, etc. Please contact me or Fr. John Wang for further information.
- **THE VICE-PROVINCE OF STS CYRIL AND METHODIUS** — Now well into its third year, the Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius is becoming a cohesive unit that has gradually emerged from five originally separate missions. The first Vice-Provincial Assembly has just concluded, further uniting the group. There are ten students in the formation program, and the confreres are preparing to start a pre-novitiate program for six candidates to begin in Kiev in the New Year, as soon as the building presently under construction is completed. The potential for personnel in the Vice-Province is promising, but in the immediate future it will remain dependent on confreres joining it from other provinces. Presently, the confreres are engaged in parochial work, direct service to the poor, and, increasingly, in seminary work and ministry to priests. The languages in use are Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Slovakian, Polish

and soon also Lithuanian. All volunteers will be provided the opportunity to learn whatever language is required.

- **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** — Rolando Santos, Homero Marín and Tulio Cordero are quite happy in PNG and assist in the priestly formation of 71 seminarians who come from 14 dioceses in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Homero supervises the pastoral work of the seminarians and supervises their medical needs. During this last term Tulio started teaching Church History and Music. Rolando does much spiritual direction for the seminarians. Armed robbery continues to be a major problem in Port Moresby, together with unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and malnutrition resulting from a decline in the over-all socio-economic condition of the country, corruption in government, and failure in the delivery of basic services, especially health and education. The Churches, especially the Catholic Church, continue to be the primary providers of basic services in many parts of the country. The Church in PNG, while still relatively young, is growing steadily, especially in the number of priestly and religious vocations. The country still needs missionaries, especially older and experienced ones, to guide the growing number of young priests who gradually are taking over important positions in parishes and the dioceses.
- **SOLOMON ISLANDS** — Our work at the seminary continues to go very well; the bishops of the Solomons have expressed their delight with the presence of the confreres. Now, with the arrival of Chacko Panathara and Joseva Tuimavule, we have taken over a parish and apostolic center, both of which are on property adjacent to the seminary. Good Shepherd Parish is made up of seven communities, far separated from each other. Fr. Chacko, with the help of local catechists, is beginning to get to know the people, many of whom are now returning to their villages, after having fled during the ethnic strife three years ago. The parish, which has about 2000 members, includes seven communities, located on the main island of Guadalcanal, as well as one community of 50 Catholics on another island, Tulagi. Fr. Chacko has been going there quite regularly by boat, which takes from 3-12 hours, depending on the weather and the condition of the boat. Fr. Joseva has been appointed as Director of the Nazareth Apostolic Center (NAC) and takes care of the Parish Mission Center when Fr. Chacko goes to the villages. The confreres working in the seminary assist in the parish at times, and vice versa.
- **TANZANIA** — The Congregation has 12 seminarians in Tanzania this year and by next year we hope to have at least 20 candidates. At the moment our students are living at a major seminary, which next year will be unable to offer accommodations for our growing number of students.

The confreres are about to begin building a house of studies. Since they lack sufficient resources, they are planning to build in stages, as funds become available.

- **MOZAMBIQUE**

a. The Vice-Province of Mozambique — The confreres of the Vice-Province work in a large area in the southern part of the country. They labor in six missionary centers and also have two houses of formation, for the Internal Seminary and the Major Seminary. Close contacts have been formed with the members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family. Pastoral services are also offered to immigrants from South Africa. The official language is Portuguese. This year three new missionaries from Brazil came to join the mission, though the Vice-Province still needs more volunteers. Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world.

b. Nacala — The community of Nacala, which lies 2400 km from the capital, is attached to the Province of Salamanca, and receives help from Costa Rica and Nigeria. It continues to run an important educational program, with the opening of various elementary schools where more than 3000 children study and with the immediate challenge of getting a secondary school started. It is also beginning to set up a center to combat AIDS in collaboration with the Community of Sant'Egidio. Its pastoral energies are at present focused on improving the Catholic radio station and on opening a new parish. The community of priests and the lay members of JMV work in close collaboration, but two departures are in the offing: Fr. Emmanuel Ugwuoke will be leaving the mission in order to begin a study program in Italy and a laywoman, Mari Carmen Lupiañez, after five years in Nacala and ten in Honduras, also is planning on returning to her homeland at the end of the year. Both did excellent work. We need two or three more confreres! The language is Portuguese; other local languages are useful.

c. The Vincentian bishop of the diocese, Msgr. Germano Grachane, is asking for two confreres to begin a minor seminary for his diocese, which is extremely poor. The candidates at the seminary will live a very simple lifestyle and will go to a high school that the diocese is already running. These two confreres will be responsible for their formation, with help from our own missionary team in Nacala (the priests and lay missionaries), as well as from priests, sisters and brothers already laboring in the diocese.

- **RWANDA/BURUNDI** — The Province of Colombia took over this mission about six years ago. The missionary team has gradually increased in number and is attempting to respond to the huge demands of the mission while assuring that the confreres work together as a team. Four houses have been opened in this period. Néstor Emilio Giraldo has just arrived in Nemba, where Juan Ávila launched the mission in 1998. In Ruzo live William Marín and Félix Eduardo Osorio; the latter is also a new member of the Region. Rogelio Toro is in Rwisabi. This year a new house was opened in Kabgai, where 25 young men take part in a pre-seminary program and a philosophy program. Alirio Ceballos and Fenelón Castillo, who serves as Director of the Daughters of Charity, reside there. Juan Ávila is the Regional Superior. Other confreres from Colombia are preparing to go there in the near future. The mission has already opened a Vincentian seminary and has vocations for the Congregation of the Mission.
- **ALBANIA** — This year the confreres are marking the 10th anniversary of their presence in Albania. In December Msgr. Angelo Massafra, President of the Albanian Episcopal Conference, will preside over a thanksgiving celebration. Two young theology students from Scutari have arrived in Naples to prepare for entrance into the Internal Seminary. In addition, the Province of Slovakia has made an important contribution to the mission by sending Fr. Vincent Zonták as a new missionary to Scutari.
- **IRAN** — Presently there are two confreres in Iran: Fr. Lazare de Gérin, who has been working in Tabriz and Ispahan for the past 30 years, and Fr. Emile Toulemonde who arrived in December 2002. He had spent much of his life in Iran, until the overthrow of the Shah and was eager to return. He works in Teheran and, for the time being, lives with the Salesians because our house there needs considerable repair. For the future, a young Iranian seminarian has just completed the Internal Seminary at the Berceau of St. Vincent and now has three more years of study in Paris. The Province of Toulouse is planning to send another confrere to Iran in September 2004.

FIRST APPEAL

Many of the needs of our missions are already evident in the news that I have presented above. Below, I will specify some of our more urgent needs.

- **ANGOLA** — Fr. Humberto Sinka is about to arrive there. He will reside in Lobito, in a house near the Daughters of Charity. Fr. Jorge Pedroza, the Vice-Provincial in Mozambique, has graciously expressed a willingness to accept the Angolan candidates for the Congregation of the Mission whom

the Daughters of Charity have accompanied in an initial period of discernment.

- **CUBA** — Our confreres in Cuba continue to work in difficult circumstances. Fr. Gilbert Walker will be arriving in these days to serve as Director of the Daughters of Charity. Several Visitors from Spanish-speaking countries recently responded generously to a special appeal that I made for personnel to help in Cuba. Because of small numbers, the confreres are spread out much too thin. Some live alone for long periods of time. Some are overworked. Some have become sick. I would like to be able to send more confreres to Cuba in the coming year.
- **EL ALTO** — Having served for five years on the Altiplano, several of the confreres have expressed the desire to return to their home country or to go to another mission. I would like to be able to send at least two more confreres to El Alto in the coming year. The languages on the mission are Spanish and Aymara. The living conditions are rugged because of the high altitude.
- **MOSKITIA, HONDURAS** — The Province of Barcelona, which is responsible for this mission, is seeking help and has already received some assistance from the Provinces of Colombia and Zaragoza. The needs, however, are very great. The mission is remote and very poor.
- **ISTANBUL** — The Austrian Province has conducted a mission in Istanbul for 120 years. Our high school there, St. Georgs, is financed in large part by the Austrian government. But unfortunately the province has no younger confreres who can guarantee the Congregation's presence in Turkey and thus assure a much-needed Christian contact with the Islamic world. The Visitor is looking for a confrere who would be willing to undertake a two-year educational program in Islamic studies: one year studying the Turkish language and culture in Istanbul and one year studying Islamic theology at the PISAI in Rome (where courses are given in either English or French). The language at our school is German.

SECOND APPEAL

Provinces continue to be enormously generous in contributing to IMF:2000-2004. Because of depressed market conditions, this fund is not growing as rapidly as its predecessor (IMF:2000) did, but it is doing reasonably well, given the present situation (which in recent months has been improving).

Each quarter at a *tempo forte* meeting of the General Council, the Treasurer General makes a report that also includes the contributions that

individual confreres have made to IMF:2000-2004. The members of the General Council always express astonishment at how abundant these contributions are. When I made the first appeal several years ago, none of us anticipated how generous the response of individual confreres would be.

Apart from IMF:2000 and IMF:2000-2004, one of my goals in recent years has been to set up patrimonial funds for our poorest provinces. The revenues from such funds, whose capital remains untouched, will help guarantee the future of those provinces and will be used for the formation of their members, their works among the poor, and the care of their aging missionaries. To create such funds, I have appealed to several better-off provinces, who have shown extraordinary generosity in sharing their resources with our poorest provinces.

I am very grateful too to confreres and friends of the Congregation who have, in their wills, left legacies, which are now bearing fruit in the missions. I can only encourage others to do the same. It is a very concrete way of expressing one's love and zeal for the missions, even after one's death.

This year's appeal is like that of other years. I make it with less embarrassment than in the past, since I see how generously you have responded to it. I ask you, with simplicity, to reflect on whether you as an individual can make a contribution, small or large, to IMF: 2000-2004. I also ask each of the Visitors to discuss with the members of the council whether your province might be able to make a contribution, small or large. I am enclosing a sheet that will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

Those are my appeals both for personnel and for financial assistance for the missions. St. Vincent loved to tell the story of great missionaries. One of the things that has most encouraged me as Superior General is the wonderful missionary spirit that I have seen among the confreres, young and old. I thank the Lord for that and ask him to continue to bless the Congregation and to deepen this spirit among us.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

IMF: 2000-2004

METHODS FOR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Provincial Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: “Congregazione della Missione” and with “Deposit Only” written on the back. These should be sent to:

Elmer Bauer III, C.M.
Treasurer General
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

2. For Italy and France, the CCP account can be used following exactly the information in the General Catalogue, page 1.
3. Other possibilities for transfers can be discussed with the Treasurer General.

Individual Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: “Congregazione della Missione” and with “Deposit Only” written on the back, sent to the address above.
2. Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Treasurer, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

In every case:

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

**SOME INFORMATION AND CRITERIA
FOR THOSE WHO WRITE**

1. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter in time to arrive in Rome by December 15, 2003.
2. So that I might read the letters all at once and so that they might be carefully organized, would you please address the envelopes as follows:

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
MISSIONS
Congregazione della Missione
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 ROMA
ITALY

3. It is, of course, 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. Details will vary according to the particular place to which a confrere is sent.
4. While we have decided that no automatic age cutoff would be established, it is surely necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.
5. Confreres who volunteer, by sending a letter to the Superior General, should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will always dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.
6. 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 what mission you would like to take part in.
7. Even if you have already written in the past, please contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are available at one moment might not be available at another, and vice-versa.

Advent 2003

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

In my first Advent letter, 11 years ago, I focused on Mary the Mother of Jesus, describing her as the ideal disciple, the first of all saints, a model believer standing before God with humility, confidence and freedom. Today, in this 12th and final letter, having reviewed many of the other characters on the Advent stage, I return to Mary, but from a very different perspective. I ask you to meditate with me this year on the “historical Mary.” The question I pose is this: what do we really know about the woman whom God called to be the mother of his Son and whom we also call the Mother of the Church? I am convinced that her life was quite different from the idyllic portraits that artists have painted and from the rhapsodies that poets and musicians have composed.

Mary was actually called Miriam, after the sister of Moses. Most likely she was born in Nazareth, a tiny Galilean town of about 1600 people, during the reign of Herod the Great, a violent puppet-king propped up by Roman military might. Nazareth seems to have been of little consequence for most Jews (“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”, Jn 1:46). It is never mentioned in the Hebrew scriptures, nor in the Talmud. Mary spoke Aramaic, with a Galilean accent (cf. Mt 26:73), but she also had contact with a multilingual world. She heard Latin at times as it slipped from the tongues of Roman soldiers, Greek as it was used in commerce and educated circles, and Hebrew as the Torah was proclaimed in the synagogue.

She belonged to the peasant class, which eked out its living through agriculture and small commercial ventures like carpentry, the profession of both Joseph and Jesus. This group made up 90% of the population and bore the burden of supporting the state and the small privileged class. Mary and Joseph’s life was grinding, with a triple taxation burden: to Rome, to Herod the Great, and to the temple (to which, traditionally, they owed 10% of the harvest). Artisans, who made up about 5% of the population, had an even lower median income than those who worked the land full-time. Consequently, in order to have a steady supply of food, they usually combined their craft with farming. The picture of the “Holy Family” as a tiny group of three

living in a serene, monastic-like carpenter's shop is very improbable. Like most people at that time, they probably lived in an extended family unit where three or four houses of one or two rooms were built around an open courtyard, in which relatives shared an oven, a cistern and a millstone for grinding grain, and where domestic animals also lived. Like women in many parts of the world today, Mary most likely spent, on the average, ten hours a day on domestic chores like carrying water from a nearby well or stream, gathering wood for the fire, cooking meals, and washing utensils and clothes.

Who were the members of this extended household? Mark's gospel speaks of Jesus, "the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here among us?" (Mk 6:3). Were these "brothers and sisters" children of Jesus' aunt (cf. Jn 19:25) and therefore cousins? Were they Joseph's children by a previous marriage? We do not know their precise relationship to Jesus and Mary, but it seems likely that they all lived in the same compound.

In Palestine at that time, women ordinarily married at about 13 years of age in order to maximize childbearing and to guarantee their virginity, so it is likely that Mary's espousal to Joseph (Mt 1:18) and the birth of Jesus occurred when she was very young. Luke indicates that Mary gave birth to Jesus during a census required by the Romans around 6 B.C., in a cave or stall where animals were stabled. A feeding trough served as his crib, as today poor refugees use cardboard boxes and other homemade artifacts as makeshift beds for newborn infants.

It would be a mistake to think of Mary as fragile, even at 13. As a peasant woman capable of walking the hill country of Judea while pregnant, of giving birth in a stable, of making a four or five-day journey on foot to Jerusalem once a year or so, of sleeping in the open country like other pilgrims, and of engaging in daily hard labor at home, she probably had a robust physique in youth and even in her later years. We err when we picture her as the gorgeously dressed, blue-eyed, blond-haired Madonna painted by Fra Lippo Lippi who often adorns Christmas cards (mine included!). Whether she was beautiful or not, she would have had Semitic features like those of Jewish and Palestinian women today, most likely with dark hair and dark eyes.

It is doubtful that she knew how to read or write, since literacy was extremely rare among women of the time. The culture was highly oral, with public reading of the scriptures, the telling of stories, the recitation of poems, and the singing of songs.

Her husband Joseph seems to have died before Jesus' public ministry began. We know that Mary herself, however, lived throughout that ministry (Mk 3:31; Jn 2:1-12). Her separation from Jesus as he went out to preach was probably very painful for her. In a passage that has always embarrassed Mariologists, Mark tells us that Jesus' family thought him mad (Mk 3:21), but what mother, upon seeing her son challenge Roman authority rather dauntlessly (this often meant death!), might not have said to him: "Are you crazy?"

John tells us that Mary was present at Jesus' crucifixion (cf. Jn 19:25-27),

though the other evangelists are silent about this. At that time she was probably close to 50 years old, well beyond the age at which most women in that era died. She lived on at least into the early days of the Church. Luke states that she was in the upper room in Jerusalem with the 11 remaining apostles “who devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women ... and with his brothers” (Acts 1:14). The lovely paintings and icons of Pentecost that we see, picturing the Spirit descending on Mary and the 11 apostles, hardly do justice to Luke’s text which indicates that she was there with a whole community of 120 persons.

After Pentecost, Mary disappears from history. The rest of her life is shrouded in legend. An active imagination easily wonders: What memories, hopes and strategies did she share with the men and women of the new, Spirit-filled Jerusalem community? Did she live on peacefully in Jerusalem as an old woman, revered as the mother of the Messiah? Did she express her views about the inclusion of the Gentiles? Was she quiet or outspoken? Did others come to her for advice? We do not know. It would seem that she died as a member of the Jerusalem community, though a later tradition portrays her as moving to Ephesus in the company of John the apostle.

Why do I focus this year on the historical Mary? For two reasons.

1. Her history brings her nearer to us. While there is an alluring quality to the gorgeous Madonnas painted by medieval artists, this first-century Jewish woman living in a peasant village was much more like billions of people today. While her culture was quite different from that of 21st century, post-industrial society, it was not unlike that of thousands of villages which continue to exist in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Her daily life and labor were hard. With Joseph, she raised Jesus in oppressive circumstances, struggling to pay the taxes by which the rich became richer at the expense of the poor. As events unfolded around her, often to her surprise and even shock, she had to figure out continually what God was asking of her. Like the vast majority of people in world history, most of Mary’s life went unrecorded. She just lived it faithfully, in the words of Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium*, 58), as a “pilgrimage of faith.” She found an abundant reserve of energy in her trust in the God of Israel and in her solidarity with the growing community of Christians who experienced the promise of life in the death and resurrection of her son.

Even though, as it has canonized saints, the Church has customarily emphasized martyrdom, asceticism, renunciation of family and worldly possessions, or lifelong dedication to the sick, the poor, and the imprisoned, today we recognize more and more that holiness consists mainly in persevering fidelity in the midst of everyday life. This is what the “historical Mary” says to us. She looked for the word of God in people and events, listened to that word, pondered it, and then acted on it. She repeated again and again and again what she said to Gabriel: “Be it done to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38).

2. Today we recognize her Magnificat as a rousing freedom song of the poor. Mary, the lead singer, epitomizes the lowly of Israel, those marginalized by society, for whom there is “no room in the inn” (Lk 2:7). God is her only hope and she sings the divine praises with exuberant confidence. While it may be difficult to imagine this revolutionary hymn coming from the mouth of a Madonna painted by Caravaggio, it is easy to envision it issuing from the lips of the historical Mary. Galilee was the spawning ground for first-century revolts against a repressive occupying power and its taxes. The Jerusalem Christians, who, with Mary, were the nucleus of the post-resurrection Church, suffered from real hunger and poverty (cf. Gal 2:10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; Rom 15:25-26). With the members of this community, Mary believed that God can turn the world upside-down: that the last are first and the first last: the humble are exalted, the exalted humbled; those who save their life lose it, those who lose their life save it; those who mourn will rejoice, those who laugh will cry; the mighty are cast down from their thrones, the lowly are lifted up. She and they were convinced that in God’s kingdom the poor are first, and the prostitutes, the publicans, the outcasts of society eat at the table of the Lord. The historical Mary herself experienced poverty, oppression, violence, and the execution of her son. Her faith is deeply rooted in that context. Before the omnipotent God, she recognizes her own “lowly estate.” She is not among the world’s powerful. She is simply God’s “maidservant.” But she believes that nothing is impossible for God. In the Magnificat she sings confidently that God rescues life from death, joy from sorrow, light from darkness.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian-martyr executed by the Nazis, wrote this:

The song of Mary is the oldest Advent hymn. It is at once the most passionate, the wildest, one might even say the most revolutionary Advent hymn ever sung. This is not the gentle, tender, dreamy Mary whom we sometimes see in paintings; this is that passionate, surrendered, proud, enthusiastic Mary who speaks out here. This song has none of the sweet, nostalgic, or even playful tones of some of our Christmas carols. It is instead a hard, strong, inexorable song about collapsing thrones and humbled lords of this world, about the power of God and the powerless of humankind.

I join with Mary and with you in singing her vibrant song this Advent. May it be both praise of God’s power and prophecy of a world to come.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

Appointments and Confirmations by the Superior General

DATE	NAME	OFFFICE	PROVINCE
09-06-2003	MARTELLO Daniel	Director DC	Belgium
09-06-2003	JEURIS Teo	Assistant Director DC	Belgium
14-06-2003	SARMIENTO FRANCO David	Director DC	Bogotá
16-06-2003	BELLISARIO Andrew E.	Director DC	USA West
28-06-2003	BARBOSA SANTOS Fernando	Visitor	Fortaleza
28-06-2003	SILVA Pedrinho Carlos	Director DC	Amazonia
23-07-2003	NAKAD Antoine	Director DC	Near Esat
24-07-2003	MODESTO F. Joaquim Coelho	Director DC	Mozambique
28-07-2003	DELPLACE Elie	Director DC	Cameroon
04-09-2003	BURDESE Giovanni	Director DC	Sardinia
12-11-2003	GAY Gregory	Visitor	Central America
19-11-2003	SOLÁS SÁNCHEZ Francisco	Visitor	Venezuela
20-11-2003	MANIMTIM Marcelo	Visitor	Philippines
25-11-2003	BOKALIC Vicente	Visitor	Argentina

SIEV
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma

INFORMATION SHEET
on the work and decisions of SIEV
N° 8 (2003)

SIEV held its annual meeting at the Provincial House of Turin (Italy) from 11-13 September 2003, continuing its visits to the major historical archives of the Congregation, after Paris (2001) and Kraków (2002).

At the meeting, four projects were finalized which, after the approbation of the Superior General and his Council, we will try to carry out.

The first project concerns a meeting of young confreres already involved in Vincentian studies. At the personal invitation of SIEV and with the authorization of the respective Visitors, these confreres will gather in Rome for a week at the end of April 2004. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage and help the confreres to apply themselves even more to Vincentian studies, thus giving a very valuable service to individual provinces and to the entire Congregation. The members of SIEV will also participate in this meeting. Fr. John Rybolt will animate it. It is hoped that this meeting, reserved for now to a small number of confreres, might be the beginning of a process which will gradually involve many others.

The second project is with regard to the collection on a CD-ROM of all the *Vincentiana* articles published from 1995 to the present, that is, from the time *Vincentiana* was published in three languages. The aim of this project is to put at the disposition of all confreres very vast and rich material for the study and deepening of our life and spirituality. We are already in an advanced phase of experimentation on one part of the material so as to create a CD-ROM containing a search engine that will facilitate consultation even for those less expert in computer technology.

The third project relates to the theme of the social doctrine of the Church. We are asking a group of “experts,” confreres and other persons linked to Vincentian spirituality, to write a series of articles on themes connected with the social doctrine of the Church and on the concrete experiences of initiatives carried out in the Vincentian world. Such articles will be published periodically on Internet on the web site of the Congregation. They could later even be collected and published in our magazines or by our publishing houses.

The fourth project concerns the annual updating of the Vincentian

publications in the various languages. We are asking the collaboration of some confreres from different countries or parts of the world. They would compile the Vincentian bibliography of the works published in their language every year. The collection of all these annual bibliographies will be made available to all on the Internet site and eventually published in the magazines that are interested in them.

Shrines: Places of Mission

by Jean Landousies, C.M.*
Province of Paris

It may seem astonishing to state that the Congregation of the Mission is engaged in the pastoral animation of numerous sanctuaries across the world, some shrines specifically linked with the Congregation or with the Daughters of Charity, but also numerous national or regional shrines directly associated with the local Church. This edition of *Vincentiana* bears witness to the considerable missionary work which is carried out in these places. In a time when “popular piety” is taking a notable and recognised hold again in the life of many Christian communities, it seems pertinent to reflect on certain aspects of the function of shrines in a Vincentian missionary pastoral perspective.

1. Shrines which gather a people together for the Lord

In these places where God visits his people...

Be they great or modest, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to saints (of the Vincentian family or otherwise) shrines are places where God takes the initiative of coming to meet the men and women of our time, where the incarnate and resurrected Christ manifests himself, in a *tangible manner* one might almost say! Places of meeting between God and people, foci of a living presence of the Resurrected One who attracts a people in order to gather them, shrines require above all that the fundamental mysteries of the Christian faith be put in high relief and that Christians be committed to the awareness that they are sent into the world, following the Christ in order to be authentic witnesses.

These “meetings,” in the varied forms they take at the shrines, respond to the diverse calls of God, be they direct or through the intermediacy of the Virgin Mary or the saints. But the process of pilgrimage undertaken by those who respond to the invitation of the Virgin to come to these places, as by those who come to honour a saint in the place where she or he lived, or by those who gather at a shrine founded at the intuition of people motivated by the Spirit, always has, as its first aim, to give glory to God.

Believers follow each other from generation to generation...

Today, the undertaking of setting out for a shrine has regained its nobility. In Europe, for example, one is conscious of the considerable developments in the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, following the ancient routes. It is interesting to situate this undertaking of the pilgrim in the history of those places the pilgrim visits and, especially, in the continuity of spiritual experience which

* Secretary of the Association of Rectors of the Shrines of France

that expresses, often over many generations. Such shrines, from the most humble to the most popular, are witnesses to a tradition of prayer but also of conversion of heart, of healing for the soul, perhaps for the body, as well as thanksgiving for graces received. The pilgrims, either as individuals or in groups, position themselves in the heart of the unending procession of those who have gone before them. The pilgrims take their place in the long process of solidarity and openness, in an immense body of believers who have come to respond to a call, understood with greater or lesser clarity, which makes them open to the Word.

To receive a specific message which the Gospel translates...

Shrines are, firstly, therefore, places in the service of the faith, even though they are not objects of faith. The messages given there can only echo the Gospel of Christ, which is revealed to human beings in its myriad facets. In this way, the spiritual experience which is unfolded there has a universal character. But the origin of each sanctuary, with its own history and its own story of foundation ... ensures that it has a specific character which witnesses also to the way in which God joins with humanity in its life and its common history. The call of events which took place in the past must urge us to be attentive to the current signs of God, in order to give meaning to the present and to orientate us to the future. Shrines are, for many pilgrims, places for pause, for interior rest, which thus encourage a return to the source of life, in order to slake one's thirst, to renew oneself and to set out again refortified.

Places of welcome and freedom...

If shrines are, more than ever, places of mission, that is because, in very many countries, they are places where people, who do not usually go to Church, gather to spend a moment, alone, in families or in groups, tourists, spiritual seekers, those seeking hope and a reason to live, maybe even those seeking God. They know, in fact, that pilgrims or people of good will, all those who come there are expected. For these places are not like others, they are recognised as places of prayer, of welcome, of peace. Pilgrim or tourist, each may discover in his or her own way that the shrine is a place to which one comes on pilgrimage; in which one looks for something; where one undertakes the process of moving towards Someone! If, in the pilgrim there is the desire to meet God, one can only hope that the tourist may also one day find him- or herself in this process of faith. Are not shrines privileged places where the Spirit comes to speak to the human heart?

In order for that to happen, the quality of the places themselves is certainly an important factor, but still more important is the quality of the people who, in various capacities, do the welcoming. To know how to listen, to dialogue, to hear the deepest issues which sometimes are difficult to express, these are the skills which are indispensable for those who receive pilgrims and visitors. The shrine is a place where the Word of God is announced with faith, in an

atmosphere of listening, fraternal and convivial towards all, beginning with the poor, the sick, the little ones and the humble.

In such a context, one can see how the “five Vincentian virtues” are remarkably missionary and particularly suited to the welcoming of those who are open to the Word which will be announced to them and shared with them. They create the conditions for an even greater respect for the liberty of people and groups, not only in the organisation of their visits to these places, but especially in the interior liberty which allows one to be open to what the Spirit says to the heart of each individual. More and more people describe themselves as non-believers or weak believers, and there are those who are members of other religions, who come to the shrines in search of the “Unknown God” or waiting for an answer to their spiritual questioning!

To announce the Gospel and to educate in the faith

Here we come to the heart of the mission of the shrines. Setting forth and deepening faith, learning the art of prayer ... what pastoral undertakings can become possible in such places! The pilgrim is one who is open and receptive. He or she can take the time to begin to understand the message of the place and, in this way, discover or rediscover the Christian faith.

All missionaries who have been involved in the work of the shrines know that these are privileged places for the announcing of the Good News and for sacramental life, particularly for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Thus, in these places, we see that the liturgy itself is at the heart of evangelisation.

Moreover, the shrines are also privileged places for the opening of minds and hearts, for broadening the horizons of one’s world to encompass the whole world, the universal Church and its mission. Finally, one cannot forget the fact that shrines are suitable places for experiencing the call to follow Christ, especially in the sacerdotal ministry or in consecrated life.

2. Shrines and popular piety

Shrines have often been derided on the basis that they are locations for the practices of popular piety. Certainly, some need to be purified and “Christianised.” One should remember however that St. Vincent recommended prayer to the Virgin by means of popular piety: the Angelus, the rosary, litanies...

The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*,** published in 2002 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, has opportunely recalled the place of popular piety in the life of the Church. The document particularly underlined that it is a rich expression of faith and that it has been, and remains, a means of spiritual nourishment for Christians throughout the ages:

Popular piety is a treasure of the Church

Could one imagine, the *Directory* asks, what would have been the result for Christian spirituality in the West if we had not had, for example, the rosary or the Stations of the Cross which throughout the centuries have nourished the spiritual life of so many generations of Christians? Could one imagine what the Christian life of many regions of the world would have been like without the shrines to which people went on pilgrimage: Jerusalem, Rome, Compostela and so many innumerable others across the globe towards which, through the ages, Christian people have made their way to entrust their lives to God, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary or the saints? The social life of many a village or region is centred on these shrines, chapels, places of worship which are scattered over so many regions of the world.

It is true that, in the course of the centuries, many superstitions have become associated with certain forms of popular piety and that gives us pause for thought on the relationship between the practice of popular piety and the liturgy of the Church. Certainly, in the decree on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Nos. 10, 12, 13), Vatican II affirmed strongly that the Liturgy is “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.” Yet, a little further on in No. 12, the conciliar text continues: “The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy.” In fact, what we call “pious exercises” or the expressions of piety of the Christian people, once they are in conformity with the laws and norms of the Church, are important for nourishing the spiritual life. All the same, adds the Council, in conformity with its initial statement “these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them” (No. 13).

After the Council, the Magisterium of the Church remained interested in this question, desiring a renewal in popular piety. Thus, in December 1998, John Paul II, in his apostolic letter on this topic *Vicesimus quintus annus*, affirms: “This popular devotion should not be ignored or treated with indifference or contempt, since it is rich in values, and per se gives expression to the religious attitude towards God. But it needs to be continually evangelized, so that the faith

** Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *Directoire sur la piété populaire et la liturgie. Principes et orientations*. Pierre Téqui publisher, Paris, 2002.

which it expresses may become an ever more mature and authentic act. Both the pious exercises of the Christian people and also other forms of devotion are welcomed and encouraged provided that they do not replace or intrude into liturgical celebrations. An authentic pastoral promotion of the Liturgy will build upon the riches of popular piety, purifying and directing them towards the Liturgy as the offering of the peoples” (No. 18).

It is, therefore, commendable to recognise the value of popular piety, to guard the true essence of it, to purify it as necessary, to illumine it in light of Scripture and to orient it towards the Liturgy, without setting the two in opposition. One can see here the urgency of forming the faithful so that popular piety might avoid those things which cultivate a focus on seeking “the extraordinary,” pseudo-religious experiences or manifestations of vague or deviant religiosity.

Popular piety is an expression of faith.

One has to recognise that the many forms of authentic popular piety are the witness to the faith of simple-hearted people, expressed in a direct way. They underline one or other aspect of the faith, without claiming to encompass everything. The tactile, bodily, visual elements which characterise popular piety are the sign of an interior desire of the faithful to express their belonging to Christ, their love for the Virgin Mary; and it is also their means of invoking the saints: to touch an image of the crucifix or of Our Lady of Sorrows, is a way of expressing that one has something in common with this sorrow. To go on foot on pilgrimage, facing tiredness and lack of money, is a way of manifesting the desire one has to come closer to the mystery which is made visible in some way at one or other shrine. To wear a medal is an expression of confidence in the intercession of Mary or the saints.

The liturgy does not do away with other legitimate forms of expression of faith in Christ the Saviour. In one way or another, authentic manifestations of popular piety always have their roots in the mysteries of Christian faith, even if they sometimes have elements whose origins may be outside of that. If, with the passage of time, changing mindsets have sometimes focussed more on exteriority to the detriment of interiority, or encouraged practices which were more or less “deviant,” it is important to help the faithful to rediscover, in the manifestations of popular piety, the vital link with the act of believing and living in Christ.

As always, while it is essential that, in the formularies of prayers as much as in the acts of devotion undertaken by Christians, Christian faith is recognisable and that one can see in these practices the necessary link with Christian revelation, still one cannot demand that every single act of faith express the entire fullness of Revelation. Popular piety is not the “thing” itself; its function

is to prepare the heart and predispose the spirit to receive divine grace in a fuller way in the liturgical celebration of the mystery of Christ!

Conclusion: Shrines, places for mission

In the sanctuaries where they work, Vincentians are the guardians of the grace associated with these places and with their message. And it is their task to allow themselves to be filled with this grace and spread it. But, there is also the possibility of developing in these places a pastoral strategy which expresses the Vincentian missionary spirit.

This offers them, at one and the same time, an opportunity and a challenge. It is an opportunity, because a shrine gathers pilgrims from all corners, because it spreads the gospel message widely and because it spreads out in waves from a spiritual centre, and finally because it welcomes those who are, to various degrees, separated from the Church, or who wish to be reunited (with the Church) without drawing too much attention.

But it is also a challenge for Vincentians, because it is possible for them to witness more deeply to the spirit of Monsieur Vincent there, especially in the way in which they welcome individuals and groups, the way in which they are present to them and the way in which they announce the gospel of hope to them. Shrines are usually frequented by the poor, the sick, those “wounded by life,” all those to whom Vincent de Paul sent his sons and daughters. They are also frequented by those who need to be made more aware of solidarity with, sharing with and attention to those who suffer. The originality of these places is that the people come on their own and are ready to listen; they have an interior openness. What a grace this offers to the missionary!

Since, in many areas of the world, pilgrimages and gatherings at sanctuaries and shrines are regaining interest, Vincentians must seize the opportunity which Providence offers them to announce the Gospel to the poor and to create links of solidarity and fraternity between men and women who come from ever more varied backgrounds. It is, in fact, another field of mission, but one which opportunely reminds us of the “spiritual” thirst, and often also the “physical” thirst of a people whose frontiers far outstrip those of the institutional Church.

(EUGENE CURRAN, C.M., translator)

The Chapel of the Rue du Bac

*by Jean Daniel Planchot, C.M.
Province of Paris*

1. Some historical markers

The former chapel of the Sacred Heart in the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, on the rue du Bac, changed its name to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in view of the manifestation of the Virgin Mary to Catherine Labouré in 1830. The spread of the medal confided to her began in 1832, and the people of Paris quickly began to call the medal “miraculous” at the time of the epidemics ravaging the city in those years.

The feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, set for 27 November, was established on 23 July 1880, the 50th anniversary of its revelation. In 1897, Cardinal Richard, with the permission of Pope Leo XIII, went ahead with the coronation of the statue of the Virgin Mary.

Up to the year 1930, there was a constant presence of the faithful. They basically came from Paris to the chapel when it was open. They would pray there either individually or in groups that recited the rosary with the sisters, but they could not regularly participate in the liturgy since the very large community of sisters completely filled the chapel.

Sisters from different houses in Paris occasionally brought their young people to the chapel. At the time of the celebration of the novena, from 27 November to 8 December, participation was even more intense.

In 1930, the centennial of the apparitions was celebrated, particularly with the “International Pilgrimage of the Children of Mary,” which inaugurated the new era of large pilgrimages. Beginning that year, a series of pilgrimages began, adding to the regular presence of a certain number of people who came when the chapel was open, and for the annual novena. The sisters of the Paris houses continued to bring their youth, groups of the Children of Mary from France and elsewhere in Europe. In addition, there were pilgrimages of specialized groups, such as bus drivers, personnel from the Bon Marché department store next door, the Basque residents of Paris, parish pilgrimages celebrating Masses of thanksgiving for children who had made their solemn communion in Paris. This movement continued until 1940. In the recollection of people from the time, the high point of participation was reached in 1930 with the pilgrimages of the Children of Mary.

In 1940, the chapel began to be opened to the public for longer hours, since the sisters were fewer in number because of the departures occasioned by the war. From then on, the faithful in Paris were able to participate in the liturgies, as were the military ambulance personnel installed in the area. Whether led by the sisters or not, the pilgrimages of Paris schoolchildren continued.

From 1944 to 1953, increasing numbers of international pilgrimages arrived, for example, from Germany, England and America. Some of them numbered 400 members.

The “Perpetual Novena” began in 1953, celebrated in the chapel every Tuesday. Many Parisians attended the novena — four of them took place each Tuesday — and the evening Mass filled the chapel to overflowing. From 27 November to 8 December, extraordinary numbers of the faithful had to wait in line just to enter.

It should be noted that after the Council, a substantial change took place: at each novena, the Eucharist would be celebrated in order to unite it to the Marian devotion. A key text in the chapel reads: “Come to the foot of this altar.”

2. The evolution of the chapel

The chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is simultaneously a place of prayer, a pastoral center and a place of pilgrimage.

- *A place of prayer* for the people. The chapel has been this certainly since 1897, or at least since the first years of the 20th century. Currently, from 5000-6000 persons come to the chapel every day. A mixture of Parisians and foreigners come to pray individually. This is more or less the same population that we have on Tuesdays. The constant arrival of the faithful from all over the world is the sign of this current bringing people to prayer in the shrine close to the Virgin Mary. Also, the large number of priests arriving to celebrate the Eucharist should not be overlooked.

For the last 30 years, we have noticed an increasing number of pilgrims from the Antilles, Reunion, India, Africa and Southeast Asia, principally from Vietnam. The number of persons of color is very large, making up about half of the pilgrims. Those who come are from all walks of life, from all social and professional classes. However, the majority are simple people and, in general, despite their social or ethnic origin, they have a simple faith that they express in classical ways. For the majority, there is no attitude of rejection of a progressive evolution, nor of the necessary changes that have to be introduced from time to time. For our part, we have to be attentive to differences of culture and religious attitudes. The ways in which those from the Antilles express themselves reflect

the unique, even surprising, formation they received in their home country.

Since the reopening of the chapel on 11 June 1980 after major renovations, we have noticed a much larger number of men than in the past, and also that they are younger in age. Nonetheless, the largest group has always been the women.

- *A pastoral center* where the accent is placed on intercessory prayer to Mary and on prayer of thanksgiving. Since 1953, outside the specific celebrations on Tuesdays, every day there is a gathering for the Eucharist at least three times, for a Marian holy hour, with the rosary, finishing with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, vespers with the community of the sisters; also regular Sunday Mass is celebrated in relation with parishes in an ecclesial perspective. On this point, it is good to mention that we are inserted into the pastoral ministry of the Diocese of Paris and that we attend pastoral meetings.

A pastoral team has been constituted, numbering five priests, about ten confessors, three full-time sisters, and a good group of lay and sister volunteers. These latter have their own work in the house, but they participate in various activities, such as welcoming individuals and groups, presenting audio-visual materials. We should not lose sight of the sisters who work elsewhere, such as in the sacristy, selling medals, and occupying various posts around the front entrance. More specifically, we have created a Vincentian environment that lets us warmly present the Vincentian Family in all its diversity.

- *A place of pilgrimage* presently frequented by groups from all over the world. Faced with this global phenomenon, we are looking for ways to respond with a Marian and Vincentian welcome in the spirit of fraternal collaboration where each one feels a part of the same mission in service of the message delivered here. To demonstrate our belonging to various ecclesial movements, we are members of the ARS (Association of Rectors of Shrines), the AOM (Association of Marian Works), and associate members of ANDDP (National Association of Diocesan Pilgrimage Directors).

As a pilgrimage center, the chapel presently receives, on average, about a dozen organized groups each week. They come from all corners of France and from all parts of the world. For France, there are school groups, catechism classes, Scouts, as well as retired persons. International pilgrimages are often composed of people who have come from Lourdes and are passing through Paris. Even there we find people of all ages. Despite the excitement of a foreign trip, we do not experience too much of a tourist mentality, since we find people who truly want to pray.

One other remark: although we might speak of a decline in Marian piety at

present, this is not really evident in the chapel of the Rue du Bac. The success of the novena begun in 1953 by Fr. Henrion and continued by his successors at the chapel seems to show that it responds to a deep need of the People of God relative to the presence of Mary in their life. In any case, we live amid a regular rhythm of participation. We can say today that, since the reopening of the chapel and the visit of Pope John Paul II, 31 May 1980, the number of pilgrims has been increasing and culminates at times on special occasions, such as the World Youth Days in 1997, when between 30,000-50,000 or more young people came each day; or at the time of major feasts, such as the Assumption, 15 August.

3. Current pastoral perspectives

We begin with the facts by making the following observations:

- The groups of those who frequent the chapel demonstrate what we normally refer to as “popular religion.”
- Their religious expression is that of the Catholic faith in its traditional form.
- We have taken special account of the religious approach of people from the Antilles, from Reunion, from Africa and elsewhere.
- We notice the presence of a certain number of young people without much doctrinal formation, but who demonstrate a large spiritual appetite.
- Even if at times we encounter attitudes that manifest formalism or even superstition, we are certain that the majority of the people are really praying and that many of them live an enlightened and active faith.

Although we are questioned less often by small numbers of people who react against our current pastoral approach, we have to affirm that the very large number of participants are resolutely faithful to the Council and who ask only to take part in the life of the chapel, such as by helping with the readings, by taking up the collections, and who take responsibility for other services, such as the sale of medals or greet guests at the entry. For a year, others have taken charge of the Internet site for the chapel:

<http://www.chapellenotredamedelamedaillemiraculeuse.com/>

- We see that the chapel is a place where many people come to bring to Christ and to Our Lady their troubles and difficulties, and it is a place where they come looking for peace. And just as wherever Mary has come to deliver a message, she brings the crowds to her Son in a movement of conversion and an approach to the Eucharist.

A priest is regularly present for the faithful who wish to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a space arranged for this purpose at the back of the chapel; hundreds of persons receive the sacrament each day.

At least three times a day Mass is celebrated, and five times on Tuesdays, without counting the Masses of the groups of pilgrims in different languages. This is where we see the strong bond between Marian devotion and Eucharistic participation (more than 550,000 hosts are distributed each year, and this could easily be multiplied by four according to the criteria developed to estimate the number of those who enter the chapel.)

Far from decreasing, piety toward Mary is manifesting its dynamism here, and it is being enriched by actuating its reason for existing: to lead more to Christ.

With Mary, centered on Christ

We are trying, therefore, to have a pastoral approach clearly centered on Christ and fully consonant with an authentic Marian devotion, with the message of Our Lady at the Rue du Bac: “Come to the foot of this altar,” and the “M” with the cross and the two hearts depicted on the medal. This Christological concept is especially evident in the Eucharistic celebrations, which are an integral part of the Tuesday gatherings. But we are also careful to show clearly the link between Mary and her Son in all the celebrations, such as the rosary and the Holy Hour. In our fidelity to the Church, to its recent Council and to the teaching of Pope John Paul II, we attempt to carry out our pastoral ministry without misplaced initiatives but rather linked to the directions given and the open possibilities with regard to the liturgy.

. . . and on the Church

In the same spirit, we try to focus our pastoral outreach truly on the Church. We are intensely united to the great moments in the life of the Church and to its intentions, whether the universal Church, the local Church, or simply the parish. We do not wish to construct a spiritual refuge with a false security, a private “chapel” closed in on itself.

We attempt to shine a doctrinal light on the Christian life through our various activities. Thus, the Sunday homilies are oriented toward a deepening of the meaning of the Word of God. Likewise, when there is a question of the message of Our Lady, a message of faith, hope and charity, we attempt to highlight this in conferences or in youth formation on our web site, in the explanatory panels we exhibit for pilgrims, and in videos for sale.

We try to have a realistic and constructive pastoral approach. Rather than systematically countering what might appear as imperfect or even derivative, we try as much as possible to emphasize the positive to clarify and rectify.

4. Looking toward 2004

Our theme for the year will be “Witnesses to the faith, with Mary.” The Virgin Mary invites us to make our own the precious gift of faith handed on to us. We want this year to be particularly dynamic, since during the week of All Saints, 2004, Paris will host the international missionary congress, whose focus will be the new evangelization of Europe.

(JOHN RYBOLT, C.M., translator)

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Shrine Parish

by Raymundo Regua, C.M.

Province of Philippines

I. History

In the beginning of the year 1978, Fr. Teodoro Barquín, C.M., then National Director of the Marian Center Inc. and of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate announced the plan of building a church in Sucat, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila. It was envisioned to be the New National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. It was his dream that this shrine would be a monument to the love of the Filipinos for the Blessed Virgin Mary to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré.

The dream started to become a reality when a charitable devotee, Mrs. Estela Marfori Posadas, donated a piece of land in her subdivision in Sucat, Muntinlupa for a church and a convent. That same year, Architect Jose Zaragosa executed a very extraordinary design for a church: ruggedly circular at the base with a twirling dome, projecting an obelisk 70 meters up in the sky and crowned with a cross. It strikes the imagination as an artistic symbol of human hands joined in an eternal gesture of prayer.

The following year, in July 1979, His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, laid the cornerstone together with the testament with the names and intentions of the donors, sponsors, affiliates and promoters of the Miraculous Medal Apostolate. In August, construction has started. It was finished in August of the following year.

On 7 September 1980, their Eminences Jaime Cardinal Sin and Julio Cardinal Rosales, Archbishops of Manila and Cebu respectively, together with two bishops and around 30 priests blessed the new church. It was dedicated as the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. That same date was the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Catherine Labouré.

II. The National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Gave Birth to a Parish

In view of the growing size of the Catholic population in the parishes of San Roque in Alabang, St. Martin de Porres in Taguig, Rizal and San Antonio de Padua in Parañaque Rizal, it was recommended to the Archbishop that a new parish be erected. On 2 February 1981, His Eminence Jaime Cardinal Sin erected by canonical decree the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal as

a parish. The parish was inaugurated on 15 February 1981 with Rev. Fr. Victor Elia, C.M., as its first parish priest and as superior of the Vincentian community in the presbytery. The community members: Fr. Exequiel Galeron and Eulogio Coello, all CMs, were assistant parish priests. Fr. Ruperto Guiritan, CM, a newly ordained Filipino priest joined the community. Due to the heavy workload in the parish, Fr. Rufo Diño, CM, from the Vincentian Central House in San Marcelino, Manila, came to help on Saturdays and Sundays, not long after Fr. Eulogio Coello, CM, went home to Spain for health reasons while Fr. Exequiel Galeron, CM, was missioned to a parish newly accepted by the Vincentians in Olongapo, Zambales.

Others who have been assigned to the parish are Fr. Adolfo Losaria, CM, Fr. Nicasio Dinglasa, CM, Fr. Norberto Carcellar, CM, Fr. Danilo Carolino, CM, Fr. Vic Velasco, CM, Fr. Toribio Macazo, CM, Fr. Dave Dulfo, CM, Fr. Frank Vargas, CM, Fr. Rolly Santos, CM, Fr. Roland Tuazon, CM, Fr. Antonino Libutan, CM, Fr. Amado Caballero, CM, Fr. Dario Pacheco, CM, Fr. Joseph Magdaong, CM, Fr. Ranny Mahumot, CM, Fr. Vince Robles, CM, and Fr. Gregg Kim Yong Ki, CM.

At present, the Parish Priest is Fr. Raymundo A. Regua, CM. He is assisted by Fr. Quirino Raut, CM, Fr. Macario Cristobal, CM, Fr. Rogelio Cardenas, CM and Rev. Raul Buen, CM.

III. Boundaries and Population of the Parish

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish covers a big area consisting of Barangay Tanyag, Purok 7, Perpetual Village, Daang Hari, Sitio Pagkakaisa, Posadas Village, Doña Rosario, Don Juan, Sucat, Purok 5, Purok 6, Purok 13, SMI, Perpetual Village X, Purok 14 and Doña Rosario Heights.

The Shrine Parish is now part of the newly established Diocese of Paranaque, inaugurated last 28 January 2003 with Bishop Jesse Mercado, DD as its first Bishop.

As of June 2002, there were about 100,000 parishioners. They are divided into three categories of people, namely, those who are very poor who live along the railroad tracts and the lakeshore, the low-middle class who live along the old national highway, and the average-middle class who live in the seven subdivisions.

IV. Parish Services

A. Miraculous Medal Family Center, Inc. (MMFCI)

Originally the Miraculous Medal Family Center (MMFC) was an affiliate of the Children's Fund, Inc. (CCF), an international funding organization, through the Vincentian Fathers. It started operations on 16 May 1984 with Rev. Fr. Victor Elia, C.M., as its first Project Superintendent.

The first clientele to be served were 325 indigent children. These beneficiaries lived in dilapidated, makeshift houses made of light materials such as scrap iron, recycled paper boxes and pieces of wood and built quite closely together. Sanitation was very poor. Most of their families could not afford electrical and water facilities for they were just casual factory/construction workers and laborers.

The project operates within the limits of the Miraculous Medal National Shrine Parish. Areas of Tanyag, Daang Hari, Sitio Pagkakaisa and Sucat are targeted for development particularly because there are more compact families in need of assistance and these families have potential to influence the community toward expected desirable changes. As a whole, these communities are totally depressed and deprived of the necessities basic to life, thus resulting in problems such as poverty and unemployment, malnutrition, out-of-school youth and drug addiction.

While the Project's goal is to develop these families into self-reliant members of the community motivated by spiritual values and commitments, the clientele will be provided with opportunities to meet their immediate basic needs as well as to develop themselves and to prepare them as future leaders of their respective communities through the following developmental programs and services:

1. Educational (Formal and Non-Formal)
2. Health and Nutrition
3. Economic Productivity Program
4. Value-Formation Program
5. Socio-Cultural
6. Community Building Program

Today the Miraculous Medal Family Center, Inc. has evolved into an NGO, Non-Governmental Organization, based in the parish. The center was conceived to uplift the living condition of poverty-stricken families through an "integrated social development approach." The objective of the organization is to pursue the integral development and evangelization of the less-privileged through various programs, projects and services done with genuine Christian humility and love. It is managed through the collaboration of the Vincentian Fathers, Daughters of Charity and laity.

Among its present services to the parish are the following:

- 1. Assistance to poor but deserving youth of the parish*

They are also known as Vincentian Marian Scholars (VMS). They study in different high schools nearby. They are provided with school fees, supplies, uniforms, books and other school-related needs. There are 103 grantees (first year–fourth year). There are 56 local sponsors. Non-formal education like typing is offered to them to help them in their academic performance. Spiritual/Value and Socio-Cultural Formation are given to them by the parish catechists and lay formators through ongoing monthly formation and annual days of recollection.

2. St. Vincent Foundation for Children and Aging (SVFCA)

There are 260 foreign sponsors assisting 209 children enrolled from grades 1-6, 31 youth studying from first–fourth year, and 19 elderly (60 yrs. and above).

3. Economic Productivity

"Samahan ng Mananahi ng Kababaihan ng Sucat." This is a sewing program organized by MMFCI of skilled sewing women from closed factories; some are already advanced in age. With the help of the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) grant of P 120,000.00 for equipment, training and materials, it started operating in July 2000, selling by piece or by the dozens school uniforms, T-shirts, clothes, etc.

B. Joint projects of MMFCI and the Miraculous Medal Parish:

1. Medical and Dental Mission – 1000 families as recipients in the year 2002
2. Gift-giving during Christmas – 1700 poor families as recipients in the year 2002

C. Vincentian Family Multi-Purpose Cooperative Miraculous Medal Branch

Inaugurated on 27 September 2002 in line with the International Project of the Vincentian Family: "The Globalization of Charity: The Fight Against Hunger," the project was initiated by the present parish priest to assist poor families in their day-to-day needs. It offers not only low prices on commodities but also has a savings program, educational benefits and shelter/housing services for its members.

V. The Shrine's Activities

A. Feast of the Miraculous Medal

1. Number of Masses in the Church – Six Masses; main Mass in the evening with 1000 + pilgrims and parishioners.
2. Novenas celebrated – one in the morning at 6:15 and one in the afternoon 6 with guest Vincentian priests and Vincentian-trained priests as celebrants/homilists. Attendance: average of 300-400 parishioners daily.

3. Number of medals distributed – 400 medals daily

B. Devotion to the Miraculous Medal – Every Saturday after the 7 a.m. Eucharist.

C. Famous clergy and lay people who have visited the Shrine

Cardinals Sin and Rosales, Bishops Gabriel Reyes, Jesse Mercado and Socrates Villegas, and poor people and families frequently visit the Shrine, as well as people from all walks of life, pilgrims from North to South of the Philippines, Children of Mary from different provinces, Marian devotees, especially during the month of May and November.

D. Other Services

Weddings – 120 (in 2002); Baptisms – 1,700 (in 2002); Catechism – 6,000 children (grades 1-6) administered by 4 parish catechists (in 2002)

E. Organizations

Children of Mary (JMV), Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP), Vincentian Ladies Auxiliary Council (VLAC), Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, Cursillo Movement, Catholic Women's League, Homeless Peoples Federation of the Philippines (HPFP), El Shaddai, Mother Butler, FAMILIA, Couples for Christ.

F. Events:

1. Pilgrimage Site – Jubilee Year 2000
2. Venue for the Fourth World Meeting of Families Linguistic Mass and Barrio Fiesta – 25 January 2003; Pilgrimage Site of the Fourth World Meeting of Families – 27 January 2003.

Last 25 January 2003, the Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal hosted a Linguistic Eucharist Celebration and Barrio Fiesta for some of the delegates of the Fourth World Meeting of Families. The 125-member delegation from English-speaking countries (like the USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Saipan) was led by Bishop Elden Francis Curtiss, Archbishop of Omaha, Nebraska, USA. The Vincentian and the Daughters of Charity community and the parishioners of the Shrine enthusiastically prepared and participated in the event by donning their Filipino attire, coming in for the Eucharistic Celebration and performing various Filipino dances and songs. The success of the celebration certainly gave a new meaning to “World Meeting of Families.”

Originale

THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL (PERRYVILLE, MISSOURI, U.S.A.)

*By Charles Shelby, C.M.
Province of the Midwest USA*

THE EARLY YEARS

The founding of Saint Mary's of the Barrens, Perryville, Missouri, precedes the founding of the State of Missouri by two years.

A group of English-speaking Catholics, descendants of Lord Baltimore's first colony of Catholics in Maryland, settled at what is now Perryville in what was then called the Louisiana Territory and named it *The Barrens*.

Vincentians came to the United States in 1816 to work on the frontier among the rural poor. In 1818, Fr. Joseph Rosati and a small group of Italian Vincentian missionaries, arriving from Bardstown, Kentucky, settled at St. Mary's of the Barrens in Perryville, Missouri, at the invitation of the Catholics in the area.

The first structure built by Fr. Rosati was a small log cabin constructed around 1825, which is still preserved under a shelter on the campus. On 6 January 1827, the foundation stone for the present church was laid, and contributions from Europe helped local efforts to complete and consecrate the structure in October 1837.

St. Mary's of the Barrens Church is modeled after what was at that time the Vincentian Motherhouse chapel in Rome, *Monte Citorio*. The current church structure was constructed from stone quarried at what is now the Miraculous Medal grotto on the Barrens property. The original architecture of the church was Tuscan Renaissance. Renovations in 1913 changed the front of the church to the Romanesque style. The Angelus Bell Tower adjacent to the church was added in 1980. The freestanding bell tower was designed in the Romanesque style to match the church façade.

The interior walls are decorated with various murals and paintings depicting significant events in the history of the Vincentians and the Catholic Church. Max Autenreib and his family restored many of the interior church paintings in the 1980's. Gary Schumer has added two paintings of recent Vincentian Family saints, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Blessed Frederick Ozanam. It is one of the oldest Catholic Churches still in use in the United States.

THE NATIONAL SHRINE AND THE ASSOCIATION OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

St. Mary's of the Barrens is the home of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. In 1832 when the first medals were being distributed in Paris, beautiful St. Mary's of the Barrens Church was being completed in the wilderness of Missouri.

In 1918, 100 years after the establishment of St. Mary's of the Barrens, the priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission in the Western Province of the United States established the Association of the Miraculous Medal with headquarters at Perryville, Missouri. The Association brings the message of hope and affirmation from Mary Immaculate, the Mother of God, to North America. The symbol of this message is the Miraculous Medal.

Promoters of the Miraculous Medal Association built the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in 1928, in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of Mary's apparitions to St. Catherine Labouré. The Shrine is a large chapel on the south side of the nave of St. Mary's of the Barrens Church. The Venerable Felix de Andreis, first superior of the Vincentians in America, is buried beneath its floor.

Through the door on the right wall of the Shrine can be seen the Votive Light room where thousands of lights burn at the request of promoters and members of the Association of the Miraculous Medal.

The National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal is the Association's center of prayer to the Virgin Mary. Mass is celebrated daily at the Shrine, and every Monday night the novena to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is prayed there.

Promoters and members send thousands of petitions a year to the Association for remembrance at the Shrine.

The Association invites its members to greater holiness by attending to their pastoral and spiritual needs, by instructing them in the Christian life, and by involving them in the apostolate of charity especially to the poor. Through their prayers and donations, members participate in the Association's mission.

DESIGNATION AS AN HISTORIC DISTRICT

St. Mary's of the Barrens Historic District was listed on the United States National Register of Historic Places on 25 August 1995. This was due primarily to

the district's significance in the settlement, education, and religious life of the area.

Within the 34-acre historic district are 11 buildings of varying degrees of architectural significance, including the log cabin. Around 1850, the "Mound" was built to honor Our Lady of Victory. It was designed after a similar European shrine described by Fr. Rosati. Symbolic of Mary's virginity, all the plants around the mound are evergreen — myrtles, boxwood, and native Missouri red cedar. Some of the plants of the Mound date to its original construction.

During World War I seminarians constructed a stone grotto dedicated to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. St. Mary's hosts an annual May Procession from the church to the grotto on the first Sunday in May. This annual event began more than 85 years ago in honor of the Blessed Mother.

The historic district represents examples of early Missouri Church and Colonial architectural styles. The buildings were constructed of native limestone and brick. Visitors have admired the beauty of the buildings and grounds since the early 1800s.

St. Mary's Historic District is an excellent example of a 19th century and early 20th century college campus. As many as 5,000 pilgrims visit St. Mary's of the Barrens and the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal every year.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Besides maintaining the Shrine as a national center of devotion to the Miraculous Medal, plans for the future include two projects.

First is further restoration of the historic character of the campus. Because missionaries went forth from the Barrens to build the Church in the western United States and in other countries of the world, the Shrine is a treasure of the Catholic heritage of America and it must be preserved.

Second is the construction of a visitor center to invite and accommodate pilgrims and other visitors. It will both serve pilgrims and enhance devotion to Mary. It will also serve as an educational center for the heritage and ministries of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States. In this way thousands of people will be invited to greater appreciation of their Catholic heritage and participation in the mission of St. Vincent.

originale

**“Mary’s Central Shrine”
Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA**

by James Kiernan, C.M. and John Hodnett, C.M.

Province of USA-East

In 1912, Fr. Joseph Skelly, C.M., received a special project from the Provincial — the construction of a Minor Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. In 1914, recalling the Miraculous Medals that his mother had placed on her 10 children, Fr. Skelly enclosed a Miraculous Medal with his fund-raising letters, asking Mary to bless his efforts. The response was so extraordinary that he felt that some special mark of gratitude to Mary was in order.

In March 1915, an organization devoted to Mary’s interests — the “Central Association of the Miraculous Medal” — came into existence, with Fr. Skelly as its Director. Its purpose was to propagate devotion to the Blessed Mother under the title of the Miraculous Medal and also to help in the formation of Vincentian students for the priesthood. *(Over the years the official “ends” of the Central Association have grown from two to four: spreading devotion to Mary Immaculate and her Miraculous Medal; the formation and education of our province’s seminarians; support of our aged and infirm confreres; support of our apostolic works on behalf of the poor.)*

In 1927, also in thanksgiving to Mary, Fr. Skelly introduced a nine-day Novena — four times a year — in the Public Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. *(The Vincentian Fathers built the Chapel in 1879 for their adjacent Seminary. At the request of Archbishop James F. Wood, it was built large enough to serve as a chapel of convenience for the surrounding neighborhood until 1902 when the local parish erected its own church. Bishop Ryan, C.M, of Buffalo, New York dedicated it.)* For three years, the Public Chapel hosted Solemn Novenas during November (Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal), February (Our Lady of Lourdes), May (Our Lady, Help of Christians) and August (Feast of the Assumption).

The idea of forming the Central Association had further consequences. In 1927, a change in the structure of the Public Chapel of the Immaculate Conception occurred. The cruciform chapel was slightly altered. The transept area (west side of the chapel), dedicated to St. Vincent de Paul, was removed and the area enlarged. In its place Fr. Skelly built “Mary’s Central Shrine.” He always spoke of it as the “center and heart of the Association.”

Surmounting the shrine altar is a statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. The marble from which it has been sculptured is what is known as first quality statuary marble, so rare and so expensive that seldom is it used, and of such exceptional quality that effects are reproduced with it impossible to attain with other marbles no matter how fine. Truly has the sculptor of our shrine statue brought out in a wonderful manner the beauty and the purity we look for in her whom it represents.

At the center of the shrine altar and below the statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal sits a magnificent tabernacle made of Pavonazzo marble, Venetian mosaic and precious metal. Although the Blessed Sacrament does not reside in this tabernacle but in the main chapel sanctuary, this beautiful work of art draws the attention of sinners and saints alike to Mary the Mother of God.

The floor of the shrine presents a design artistically worked out in a rich combination of rare and semi-precious marbles, with inlays of Florentine marble mosaic. In the center is an especially noteworthy piece of mosaic work embodying the name "Mary" in honour of Mary the Mother of God. There is a rich marble altar rail that separates the shrine from the main chapel. To this day the exquisite beauty of the shrine attracts many people to it.

In May 1928, Fr. Skelly introduced the Association's quarterly magazine, *The Miraculous Medal*. In his first column Fr. Skelly stated: "Not long after the establishment of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, we saw the benefit, if not the necessity, of publishing a magazine which would be the organ of our Association, in order to bind by closer ties all workers for the cause of Mary Immaculate." Printed four times a year, the magazine continues as an instrument of much good for all members of the "Central Association." Over the years, it has been a vehicle for "telling the stories" about our province's seminarians, missionaries and their varied works with and for the poor.

The devotions at the shrine became so popular and so fruitful that the Director of the Association made another momentous and courageous decision. While retaining the Solemn Novena in preparation for the feast of the Miraculous Medal, he decided to inaugurate a weekly Novena service. After consulting local parishes about their evening activities, he chose Monday as the day for the Perpetual Novena in honour of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

On Monday, December 8, 1930, in order to honour the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions of our Blessed Mother to St. Catherine Labouré, Fr. Skelly himself initiated the first Monday Evening Novena Service. He used a "little Novena booklet" containing the prayers his confreres prepared especially for this Novena. In time, the number of Monday services grew to 12.

The Perpetual Novena is still alive and well today at Mary's "Central Shrine." Each Monday — at all ten Novena Services — two confreres are available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The shrine chapel underwent major interior renovation in 1979. More recently, we had to replace the tile roof and refurbish the steeple carillon.

In the millennium year, the Archdiocese designated the shrine chapel as one of six official pilgrimage sites. In the year 2002, upwards of 95,000 people visited the shrine church. We also hosted visits from 35 pilgrim group tours. In 2002, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia reported that the Miraculous Medal Novena is the most popular novena devotion in its parishes. The Eastern Province gives thanks to God and to his Blessed Mother for hearing the cries of the poor during these 88 years.

originale

The Sanctuary of St. Justin de Jacobis at Hebo (Eritrea)*

*by Antonio Caccetta, C.M.
Province of Naples*

On 8 August 1853, St. Justin wrote in his Diary:

Last night the “Shoho” goatherds saw those two same lions that were roaring last night near our house walk back and forth, from the rise of the moon until daybreak, around our church at Hebo. All the sheep, the night before, had been put in a safe place. The lions had nothing better to do, it seemed, than to circle the church peacefully. In Ethiopia it is said that lions are accustomed to visit and respect great sanctuaries. Might it someday happen that our church here will become, for these same Moslems who think this way, a great Sanctuary?

A “dream” for the mission of Hebo

If for Justin it was a thought (and perhaps more, given his uncommon gifts!) linked to the popular belief of “lions circling a church,” for the confreres of Hebo it became a “project” that, because of the civil war, was a phantasm, a “dream” very far off, but now becoming real in a wonderful way after decades of waiting, after many sacrifices and worries (some of which are not yet finished).

After St. Justin, the presence of the Vincentians in Eritrea (and Ethiopia) followed the fortunes and the alternating victories and defeats of the Italian occupation of these territories: it was unstable and of little effect. Only after 1945, through the initiative of Bishop Pane, CM, aided by concrete help of Bishop Kidanemariam Kasà, the first bishop of Eritrea and Ethiopia, did the Holy See consent to the presence of the Vincentians of Naples in Hebo, the village which jealously preserves the mortal remains of St. Justin. The important people of the area also gave us the land on which the “Mission” has grown up with its various parts: the House of the Confreres with the Apostolic School, the House of the Daughters of Charity with its Orphanage and Medical Dispensary, the parish Church, a large area where, afterwards, other buildings and works developed: the well, a school (donated by the parish of Santa Maria in Lecce, Italy), the library, the cemetery chapel, and the farms for the needs of the Mission. The final signature of the documents necessary to safeguard the foundation was on 28 July 1948. Legal recognition by the civil authority took place on 21 June 1950.

* Article previously published in *Informazione Vincenziana* (Year IV, number 8 – October/November 2002), pp. 25-27.

Referring to the Church-Sanctuary, Bishop Pane had already hoped (1950) that: “The Church that will rise will be dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the great apostle of Marian devotion in Ethiopia, our Blessed Justin” The cornerstone was laid on 25 June 1961, through the planning of Archbishop Sticchi. The economic difficulties, the war for the liberation of Eritrea, not only made the construction inopportune and impossible at that time, but it forced everyone to rethink the project as it was first conceived (for it was now not in harmony with the place and with the needs for worship). When the 1990s arrived, after a number of different plans, the engineer Fidane Woldeghiorghis (EKIP) drew up a plan that was more responsive to the needs and more in line with oriental and Coptic architecture. Other difficulties still came up while trying to complete this project (in 1998, the war of Bedemè, with all its economic consequences, the scarcity of materials, the problems of transport and manpower; not least of which the crumbling of the bell tower, which happened on 19 April of that year, fortunately without any harm to anyone or any other building).

As a consequence, the projected date for completion during the Great Jubilee of 2000 could not be respected, even though we were able to use the underground part of the structure).

28 July 2002

All the dreams were fulfilled on the above date, (even if, as often happens, being snowed under and with a lot of refinishing left to do at another time), 150 years after the blessing of the little Church of St. Justin at Hebo, where up until now the urn containing his mortal remains was venerated and which now has been moved to the new sanctuary.

The dream became a multicolor image impressed on the eyes of all. There were songs, sounds, important persons representing the central government as well as the various regions, and there were hundreds of pilgrims, full of faith and affection for their most beloved Abuna Jaqob Mariàm. All the bishops of Eritrea, with Archbishop Beniamino De Palma, former Provincial of Naples, concelebrated the Mass with the Bishop of Asmara and blessed and consecrated the temple. Naturally, the vice-Visitor of Eritrea, Fr. Yosief Zeracristos; the Visitor of Naples, Fr. Giuseppe Guerra, CM, was present, as was Fr. Fernández H. de Mendoza, CM, the Vicar General of the Congregation, who represented the Superior General, who was in Toronto for World Youth Day, Fr. Victor Bieler, CM, the Assistant General for the Missions, almost all the confreres of the Vice-Province of Eritrea, and other confreres who came from Italy and Mozambique.

All ready the day before pilgrims had been arriving in an uninterrupted stream, many by foot, sometimes preceded by an ox, which would be slaughtered

for the feast. Hebo, in all its long history, had never seen so many people at one time, praising God both inside and outside the Temple, constructed to fulfill a dream of St. Justin de Jacobis, with the sacrifices and help of so many confreres and benefactors, some of whom already enjoy the eternal reward for their labors. It is difficult to express what people felt in their souls, outside of how they participated in the rite of blessing. It was an extraordinary event for all of us from the West, for it filled our minds with such emotion and admiration. The prayer made was very heartfelt, because in play were peace, justice, well being, progress, stability, and the future of Eritrea!

Heaven, for its part, helped, interrupting the rainy season for a day, even if that water is so precious, because this year the rains came late, threatening both planting and harvesting.

The echoes of the sounds and the songs filled the whole area of Hebo and spread over the mountains and onto the high plains ... for a certain return of blessing and grace for all.

(ROBERT STONE, C.M., translator)

Shrine of Our Lady of Luján (Argentina)

*by Ventura Sarasola, C.M.
Province of Argentina*

Spain, the Motherland, has passed on to Latin America a unique legacy: Marian devotion.

Fr. José Julio Matovelle, in his *Obras Completas* of 1891, compiled a list of shrines and images of the Blessed Virgin in Latin America (beginning with Mexico and ending in Argentina, with a special focus on Ecuador). He listed 150 different titles of the Virgin, 24 of which have their origin in Latin America. Of the 70 dioceses in Latin America, 50 have the Virgin (under some title) as their patroness.

The legend of the “pure and immaculate conception of Our Lady of Luján” has many aspects that are similar to that of “Our Lady of Buglose” which took place in the Pyrenees and is noteworthy because it occurred near the birthplace of Vincent de Paul, our founder. The events that gave rise to this legend took place in 1621 and subsequently the shrine of Buglose was entrusted to the Congregation in 1706. The Shrine of Luján was given to the Congregation in 1872.

In 1630, a wealthy Portuguese landowner from the district of Río de la Plata, who held extensive property in the interior of the country (Sumampa-Santiago del Estero), a distance of about 1200 kilometers from Buenos Aires, wanted to dedicate a chapel to the Mother of God on his land. As a first step he asked a friend of his, who lived in São Paulo, Brazil, to send him a statue of Our Lady. This friend responded by sending not one but two statues.

There are many similarities between the events of Luján and Buglose. In the latter case, an ox discovered the statue and the oxen refused to travel any further once they reach the town of Pouy, the seat of the ancient chapel that was destroyed by the Huguenots. In the former case, in Buenos Aires, after having crossed a shallow part of the Luján River, the oxen would not continue their journey and the cart that transported the statues became immobilized until the statue was removed from the cart. The statue was an image of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, 20 inches in height (38 centimeters) and made of terracotta.

The statue remained there while the muleteers continued their journey, transporting the other statue known as “Our Lady of Compassion” another 1,150 kilometers to Sumampa.

A hermitage, the first shrine, was built on the bank of the Luján River, and many devout believers from all parts of the country traveled there. Then, in 1671, a rich landowner who also lived on the bank of the Luján River, but about 30 kilometers away, bought the image for 2,000 pesos for the priests of the Cathedral of Buenos Aires who also owned the hermitage. He brought the statue to his land and there, with the help of a priest who attributed his restored health to the Virgin Mary, built a chapel and donated land so that a small town could be established around this second shrine which was inaugurated in 1685.

In 1730, the town of Luján was established as a parish and became an attraction for devout pilgrims who wanted to fulfill the promises they had made to God.¹

Another person was privileged to miraculously recuperate his health in 1737, and then, responding to the call of the first pastor and the Bishop of Buenos Aires, proposed to build a new church. Juan de Lezica y Torrezuri, from the Basque country, named “The Founder, the Benefactor, and the Mayor of the Shrine of Our Lady of Luján” began the construction. After eight years of laborious work, the third shrine was completed in 1762. Massive like the faith of its builder and the generosity of the pilgrims, it rose like a fortress in the midst of the ruins of the village.

From 1731-1871, 26 diocesan priests ran the 30 curacies of the parish. During that time period 17,165 baptisms were celebrated; this number gives us an idea of the increase in the number of pilgrims who visited this shrine throughout the years.

On 3 December 1871, a pilgrimage (perhaps the first official one) was begun in Buenos Aires. Soon it became obvious to the pastor, Luis Duteil, and to the Bishop, Federico Aneiros who was in charge of the Archdiocese, that a new building and more organization were needed to handle the growing number of pilgrims. They decided to entrust the shrine and the parish to a religious order.

The “Bayoneses” Fathers, recently arrived in the country, refused the offer, but after some initial hesitation, the Congregation of the Mission accepted.

¹ In Argentina and Chile: people who fulfill pious promises by participating in procession are referred to by the name *promesantes*.

On 28 February 1872, Eugene Freret and three French confreres took charge of the parish and the Shrine of Our Lady of Luján. The Vincentians would remain there until 18 November 2001.²

Twenty-six curates, 23 pastors, 105 vicars would work here. Some other significant statistics: 778,639 baptisms (not including those for 2001). This averages out to 6,083 baptisms annually or 112 weekly. This growth occurred over a long period of time. The largest number of baptisms took place in 1984 when 23,267 people received the sacrament.

From the beginning Fr. Feret and his associates began to repair the old and deteriorating church, as well as revitalize the life of the parish community and evangelize the pilgrims.

There is no doubt that the presence of Fr. George Marie Salvaire in this mission marked a definite high point in the history of Luján and the work of the Vincentian Community there. Much has been written about him and yet it is still very difficult to accept the limitations of space when recounting his story. He was French, born of French and Spanish parents. He arrived in Argentina in 1871, the year of his ordination. He was part of the first group of missionaries to arrive in Luján. In 1874 he was sent to the villages to evangelize the indigenous population. Sentenced to death by the aborigines, he called upon Our Lady of Luján and promised to write a history of this devotion and enlarge the shrine if his life was spared. The son of the chief saved him and he was convinced that the Virgin Mary has rescued him. He fulfilled his promise and in 1884 published two large volumes entitled *History of the Virgin of Luján*. Leo XIII blessed a precious crown that had been made in Paris and the crown was placed on the head of the statue on 8 May 1887, in the presence of 40,000 pilgrims. Eight days later the Archbishop of Buenos Aires laid the cornerstone for the future basilica. Inspired by the cathedrals of his country, Fr. Salvaire planned to build a gothic style structure. In 1889 he was named pastor and chaplain of the Shrine of Luján. He looked for ways to fulfill his promise, but was unable to do so. In 1890, he began the magazine *La perla del Plata*, a publication of the National Shrine. He had discovered his prophetic mission.

When Fr. Salvaire died in 1899, the visible construction of the basilica's apse and transept formed the outline of the future temple. The organized pilgrimages were also an answer to his desire for greater veneration of the

² Editor's note. In *Nuntia* (November 2001) the departure of the Congregation of the Mission was noted: "Farewell to Lujan. On 11 November, invited by the faithful of Luján, who filled the Basilica, the Argentinean Province, represented by many confreres, concluded, in a farewell Eucharist presided over by the Visitor, its pastoral service at the National Shrine to Our Lady of Luján, where the Congregation of the Mission, through its missionaries, "constructors and guardians of the Shrine," had given service to millions of pilgrims for 130 years."

Mother of God and offered a way for her children to repay the Virgin for their growth in faith, hope and love of God and his Son, Jesus Christ.

The Congregation of the Mission, faithful to its charism and guided by a spiritual impulse, continued the dream. New builders appeared in the person of Frs. Brignardello, Dávani, Gimalac, Prat, etc., and so did new evangelizers, administrators, and confessors who sowed the good seed and brought about reconciliation at all levels.

The shrine was completed in 1935 and replaced the now deteriorated and ruined building of Lezica y Torrezuri. Several chapels and schools were also built within the parish boundaries and these served the needs of the Christian community which continued to grow.

At the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Basilica of Luján was administered by 14 Vincentian missionaries, the majority of whom were young. They took great care to begin the liturgical renewal and to write about these new changes in their publications: full and active participation of the laity and the importance of shrines for the popular devotion of the people. *La perla del Plata* (May 1966, # 2607) highlighted the progress that had been made in the parishes and also raised the question about those persons who neither practiced their faith in some consistent way nor were part of the local parish community. What was the role of the shrine in these situations?

During the previous year (1965) in the Basilica of Luján communion had been given to 240,000 persons, 9,709 baptisms were registered, 375 confirmations and 348 marriages (47 of which were regularizations).

Some pastoral agents felt uneasy and looked askance at the movement of the shrines, feeling that it was like casting pearls before swine. Obviously this was very painful to hear and gave way to a communal reflection that concluded that the shrines presented a very beneficial religious-social phenomenon.

In the magazine, there appeared an editorial entitled “Shrines versus Parishes.” It was not very well thought out nor did it respond to the present reality. It annoyed many people and thus made it difficult to remain focused on the theme. But what was written was written. The shrines, especially those like Luján, are attractive to those who have a special devotion. At the same time they are also centers where many believers, who for various reasons find themselves on the fringes of their local churches, can come together to discover anew, either consciously or unconsciously, that they are members of the Universal Church. The shrine then becomes a mission center, a source of grace for those who find themselves alone and alienated, a place that brings together people who share a common faith, hope and love.

An example of this is seen in the religious laxity of the “immigrants,” who found in pilgrimages to the Shrine of Luján not only an affective coming together of peoples of diverse ethnic backgrounds, but also a place where they could express their profound devotion to the Virgin Mary, a devotion of a believing family in exile. Without any pretext of being an inclusive list, we simply mention Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Polish, Slovenians, Croatians, Slovaks, Germans, Italians, Galicians, Catalans, Japanese, Paraguayans, Bolivians, etc., all of whom found in the shrine the great upper room where the Eucharistic banquet was realized.

Bishop Zapelac, the Ukrainian Eparch stated: “For many of the people who journey to Luján, and participate in the Mass (two hours in duration and in the language of the people) and fulfill their Easter obligation, all of this is a matter of life or death.”

The Argentinean dioceses have experienced many spiritual benefits as a result of the organized pilgrimages. The 18 dioceses that make up the province of Buenos Aires (310,000 square kilometers) annually schedule their Marian devotions in the Basilica of Luján. These groups might be charismatic or devoutly Catholic, or simply popular in their make-up.

While the bishop or archbishop concelebrates the Eucharist with his priests, long lines of penitents form outside the confessionals (people waiting three, five, or eight hours). The Holy Spirit is definitely at work during this time.

Frequently young men and women walk the 12-hour/60-kilometer trip from Buenos Aires to Luján. The tabloids calculate the number to be *increasing*, year after year, to more than a million people (make your own calculation: 5,000 people fit inside the basilica: if every second ten people enter and ten people leave, what happens?!).

Besides these gatherings one must also look at the numerous pilgrimages of dioceses in the interior of Argentina as well as the pilgrimages that are made by so many parishes, schools, and lay organizations, all of whom come here to the shrine to honor the most Holy Mother of God and to satisfy their thirst for God. But the real phenomenon is found in the great number of pilgrims, anonymous individuals, who throughout the years have traveled to this shrine by car, pickup truck, bus and train. They all have their own particular reason for undertaking the pilgrimage but they all share one common objective: to give thanks to the Virgin or to ask her to intercede for them in some particular situation. It must also be admitted that many travel here because of superstition or believing some kind of magic will be worked.

How did the Vincentian community receive and serve the many visitors who traveled to this holy place. In 1966 this answer was given: “Our special charism guides all our work and concretizes our mission (to evangelize the poor) in the world today and in the particular situation in which we find ourselves. The Congregation of the Mission finds here the way to make real its ideals; namely, the opportunity to plant the Word of God in the hearts of the poor and to give them God’s grace through the celebration of the sacraments.” As for the hearing of confession — well that is something quite special and requires almost no explanation. But it should be said that “everyone who waited in the long lines found a missionary who was willing to listen to them, a missionary who was concerned about their spiritual welfare and eager to serve them through the sacramental ministry.” Knowing how to live as missionaries was a source of great satisfaction for the Vincentians and provided the pilgrims with the security of being able to find a true minister of God.

Most of the pilgrims who came to the shrine wanted to leave with some relic, some “blessed” object from Luján. Thus one could find in front of the shrine: 120 vendors selling every type of religious article imaginable and in the area surrounding the shrine, many small shops that tend to the varied needs of the pilgrims.

Many blessings were bestowed on those who came to this shrine. As holy water was sprinkled over the pilgrims, the faith was explained to them. This was especially apparent on weekends and other times when organized groups like schools, parishes and dioceses gathered at the shrine and prayed together. There was definitely a communal dimension to these pilgrimages and yet at the same time it was also an occasion for personal encounter between the pilgrims and the ministers.

The contract between the diocese and the Congregation was terminated on 18 November 2001. The Archbishop of Luján did not want to renew the contract. On 11 November, a Mass was celebrated at 8:00 p.m. to thank and bid farewell to the missionaries of the Congregation. In December of the same year, the organizing committee of all these events published a letter to “publically express our gratitude, esteem and awe” for those who participated in “such a noble and spiritual endeavor.” The letter went on to say: “The humble environment of the basilica’s basement was converted into a crypt for multicultural expressions of Marian Devotion.³ Indeed, the basilica is a symbol of the missionary work of the

³ The images of Mary that are in the crypt represent the following nations: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, United States, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Venezuela, Germany, Armenia, Austria, Canada, Korea, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, France, Greece, Hungary, England, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Sweden, and Ukraine.

128 Vincentian priests and brothers who toiled for so many years at this shrine.⁴ Only a few members of the community have plaques erected to honor their memory, but the names of all of these missionaries have been written in the Book of Life. The proclamation of God's word, the memorial of Christ's passion and death celebrated daily, God's people being made holy through the sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist (at present, 15,000 communions a month), and the reconciliation of millions of Christians from every social class, all this, plus supportive and charitable action that, through specialized organizations, extends to even the most remote dioceses of the republic are reasons to give thanks, and you, like us, feel the impact of the departure of the Vincentian Community. Yet we are certain that the work of God will continue, and we consider ourselves, laymen and women, to be the leaders of this movement that marches forward in accordance with the will of God, a movement that builds on the foundation laid by those who came before us, a movement rooted in the spirit and the charism of Vincent de Paul: to evangelize and serve and make holy the people of God, and to see Christ in the neighbor, especially those who are poor."

(CHARLES PLOCK, C.M., translator)

⁴ Editor's note: When the Congregation was leaving Luján, a member of another religious congregation wrote the following: "This Marian Basilica remains here as a sign of the faith of the Congregation and a witness of the untiring labor of its members who stone upon stone have given the Virgin of Luján this beautiful house of worship. For almost 130 years (1872-2001) the Vincentians have lived here and influenced this area of the country by their evangelization. They have left their mark here and formed many friendships and now we say sad good-bye to men who cared for this sanctuary and at the same time we offer to them our prayers of thanksgiving."

A RE-READING OF THE MESSAGE OF THE RUE DU BAC FOR OUR TIMES*

by *Fernando Quintano, C. M.*
Director General of the Daughters of Charity

Introduction

This is not the first time that someone has been asked to discuss this topic: How to actualize the message of the Rue du Bac in today's world? This concern arose as a result of the 150th anniversary of the apparitions of the Virgin to St. Catherine and since then this theme has been discussed on numerous occasions by different authors.¹

When reading some of these writings, I have been able to verify, once again, not only the risks that one runs but also the temptations into which one can fall when celebrating the anniversary of certain events and persons of the past. It would seem that one might attempt to show that most of the problems of the present and of the future — and even solutions to these problems — have been clearly announced in specific events of the past.

I myself do not want to fall into such a temptation when discussing the subject of re-reading the message of the Rue du Bac for our times. I do not agree with those authors who attempt to re-read the message and who, at the same time, say that they can deduce from such an event specific social, political and religious implications. Such implications can only be discovered as people are faithful to following the way of Christ — a demand placed on all Christians. The political, social and religious implications of such events are also uncovered as one lives a life of faith that is rooted in the unfolding of history. Such implications are not expressly contained in the message that was given to St. Catherine or in the symbols that are shown on the Medal.

* This article was given as a conference by Fr. Quintano on the occasion of the First International Meeting of the Association of the Miraculous Medal (Rome, 22-26 October 2001). It was later published in the book: *Asociación de la Medalla Milagrosa. Una nueva imagen para un nuevo milenio*, Editorial La Milagrosa, Madrid, 2002, pp. 47-75. This book contains the majority of the conferences that were given during that meeting.

¹ Cf. Michel Lloret. *Echoes of the Company*, June 1980, pp. 218-244; February 1988, pp. 52-59. A Feuillet, *Esprit et vie*, N° 49, 4 December 1980, pp. 657-675. J. P. Prager, C. M. "María de los Pobres; una relectura de la Medalla Milagrosa desde la periferia," in *Anales de la Congregación de la Misión y de las Hijas de la Caridad*, Madrid, December 1994, pp. 513-519. See also Jean Guittou, *La Rue du Bac ou la superstition dépassée*, published by SOS, Paris, 1974 and R. Laurentin, *Las Apariciones de la Virgen María a Santa Catalina Labouré*, Salamanca, 1981, pp. 127-157.

Certainly the Christian life is a new global way to conceive and live our lives in the likeness of Christ, and not a series of behaviors combined together with no connection between them. But it is also certain that the Christian life can have certain celebrations, commemorations, and meetings specifically orientated toward the cultivation and the actualization of some concrete dimension of faith. I do not want to exclude any particular gathering, commemoration or celebration here, but I am under no illusion that each one of these events has repercussions on every aspect of Christian life. A re-reading of the message of the Rue du Bac should be made for our times, but it does not have to impact, for example, the problems that exist in our world today: the problem of cloning human beings, the alarming deterioration of the environment and the network of international terrorism. The devotees of the Miraculous Medal are not unaware of these and other social, economic and religious problems. But no one puts forth the idea that said devotion is a remedy for atheism and religious indifference, or contains the solution to all the physical and moral sufferings that humanity experiences, or holds the answer for all the doctrinal, pastoral and moral problems that exist within the Church.

This long introduction allows me to set up the boundaries for this conference and also to briefly outline the points that will be discussed here.

In the first part I will try to show why it is necessary to re-read the message of St. Catherine for our times. Such a re-reading will attempt to understand the message in the way the Church does when dealing with private revelations. Here also I will use the contributions of human sciences.

In the second part I will speak of the message of the Rue du Bac and I will focus on the Medal as the privileged representation of said message.

In the third part I will make a re-reading of that message in light of the Pope's letter that was addressed to the whole Church on the occasion of the closing of the Jubilee Year (6 January 2001). In it, John Paul II points out some fundamental lines of action that should inspire all pastoral projects at the beginning of the third millennium.

In any re-reading of the message of the Rue du Bac, it will be necessary to keep before us St. Catherine's identity and our own identity in the Church, namely, followers of Christ in the footsteps of Vincent of Paul and Louise de Marillac.

I. Re-reading the message in light of the Magisterium of the Church and of human science

a) What does it mean to do a re-reading?

To re-read is to read anew the written story or an event of the past. I do not mean to imply here some simple repetitive act, but rather reading the story from a new perspective that helps us discover aspects and dimensions not uncovered in previous readings. To read stories or recapture events of the past in light of new and changing historical situations helps us to discover new aspects of the story and gives new meanings to the language and the symbols that were communicated to us in the original story.

Referring to the extraordinary spiritual experiences that St. Catherine has transmitted to us, it should not be forgotten that, like other similar cases, stories use a language that is marked with symbols and conditioned by personal experience, as well as by the culture, social situation, and politics of a particular moment in history. If the message or story is meant to call us to move beyond concrete circumstances then it is necessary to read the story from a new historical perspective. Only in this way can our re-reading move beyond personal whim and individual prejudice, move beyond the inconsequential aspects of time and place, literary genre, sensibility of the witness, etc., and ultimately arrive at the permanent and essential aspects of the message.

These extraordinary spiritual experiences, although they are gifts given to an individual person, are rooted within the Church and they are given as gifts that are meant to enrich the whole people of God. This Church, according to Vatican II, is sensitive to and in solidarity with the joys and hopes, with the fears and sorrows of all the People of God, but especially of the poor and those who are suffering.² In the life of this Church, in its drawing near to the world, in the new theological reflection, in the advances of biblical exegesis and of the human sciences, etc., we find new lights that help us to understand the content of the original stories, frequently expressed in symbolic language. For that reason we have to re-read these stories in light of these new discoveries and insights.

The philosopher and French Christian thinker, Jean Guitton, in his book on the message of the Rue du Bac says:

The veiled side of the apparitions has become more perceptible at the end of the 20th century ... The apparitions of 1830 take on a deeper meaning as time passes.³ ... The mystical iconography of the Medal of 1830 is anticipatory and synthetic by nature. The commentary on the Medal too is unfinished, but it is much richer than in 1830.⁴ ... The sign of the truth of its “prophecy” (of the

² Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

³ Jean Guitton, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Rue du Bac) is precisely that it reproduces itself, just like stone thrown into water produces ever more widening successive ripples; that is, it reverberates, it renews itself and it enriches itself like the musical theme of a symphony. In this case, the symphony is one of time.⁵

Also Mother Rogé, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the apparitions, invited the Daughters of the Charity to re-read the message that the Virgin gave to St. Catherine.

b) The position of the Church is always one of caution in dealing with private revelations

The apparitions, especially of the Virgin, constitute a phenomenon that is characteristic of the modern age. In fact, they have become more frequent than in previous times in the history of the Church. The origin of several important spiritual currents has its origin in the concrete appearances of Christ or of the Virgin; for example, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, or the Marian devotion movement that took place as a result of the Rue du Bac, Lourdes, Fatima, etc.

The cautious attitude of the Church is understandable in light of such numerous appearances and revelations. History has taught the Church to be critical and prudent before phenomena that can be deceiving and easily called into question. For that reason it demands guarantees of credibility.

Such a cautious position expresses the double warning of the scriptures. One from St. John: *Do not trust every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they belong to God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*⁶ The other from St. Paul: *Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good.*⁷

The Church invites the Christian community to affirm the revelation contained in Holy Scripture and in Tradition. With regard to these appearances and other private revelations, when the Church judges them reliable from the testimonies of the persons involved and arguments that are put forth in favor of their authenticity, it allows them to stand as realities that can be believed piously by the faithful, but only with human faith. The expression “human faith”

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁶ 1 Jn 4:1.

⁷ 1 Thes 5:19-21.

indicates that the appearances or private revelations are different in nature and therefore require a faith that is also different from the faith which one uses to affirm the great revelation of God in Christ. This means that Christians can continue to be called Christian even though they might not accept the appearances or other private revelations. These “supernatural” phenomena, if they are authentic, are related to the Christian life, but are not part of the sphere of divine revelation on which the Catholic faith rests. The Church, properly speaking, does not approve any apparition or private revelation. When the Church judges them to be authentic, it recommends them to the faithful and as such, is saying that these events contribute to the development of the spiritual life. In affirming these cases the Church, by means of the magisterial ministry of its shepherds, gives them “the green light,” the “nihil obstat,” so that they can be accepted as “objects of pious belief.”⁸

Such a cautious position of the Church before the supernatural phenomena is wise and justifiable, today more than ever, given the proliferation of such phenomena and the ease with which many people are inclined to accept them without sufficient discernment. The inclination of human beings to stand in awe in the presence of extraordinary events is frequently expressed today in the credulity before so many diverse apparitions of the Virgin. Certainly, the Church and theology admit the possibility that the supernatural is manifested in history. They are not opposed to private revelations. They recognize that God can reveal, through Mary, some truth of Holy Scripture and that such revelations might very well be made to correct deviations from the truth, as well as to intercede on our behalf in face of certain dangers. They are extraordinary signs of the free action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and are expressions of the charismatic and prophetic dimension of the People of God.

On the other hand, to attempt to explain such phenomena from the theory of myths and from an analysis of the psyche of the visionary, or to reject them because they escape the understanding of human science, is to begin from a point of view that is rationalistic and close-minded. But to admit them without a critical examination and without serious discernment is to leave oneself exposed to deceit and manipulation. Jean Guitton, a serious intellectual who is neither suspicious nor a skeptic, has written:

In our day and time when the human sciences are developing more than ever, when psychoanalysis, sociology, metaphysics and in-depth psychology change the boundaries between that which is natural and that which is unlikely, it is all the more necessary that

⁸ This is the expression that the Sacred Congregation of Rites used when referring to the Apparitions of Lourdes in its declaration of 12 May 1877.

*ecclesiastical authority not pronounce the word “miracle” from the outset with regard to these messages and their spiritual effects.*⁹

II. The message of the Rue du Bac

a) Catherine’s story

St. Catherine told Fr. Aladel, at first orally and then 26 years later in written form, the details surrounding the various apparitions that she had seen in the chapel of the Rue de Bac between the months of April and December 1830: visions of St. Vincent’s heart on three consecutive days and in various forms and different colors, visions of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and of Christ the King and three apparitions of the Virgin (18-19 July, 27 November and December).

All these visions contained a message that was revealed to Catherine. She herself interpreted the message and transmitted to us the meaning of the different colors of St. Vincent’s heart, the clothing of Christ the King, the gestures and words of the Virgin and the symbols on the Medal.

The Virgin’s first two visions were accompanied by pronouncements. In the dialogue that lasted two and a half hours, during the night of 18-19 July, the Virgin communicated to St. Catherine the fact that some sad events in the political, social and religious order were drawing near. The Virgin also spoke of some abuses that were taking place in the two Companies and of the special protection that both would have from the Virgin and from St. Vincent.

The vision of 27 November, which occurred during Catherine’s evening prayer, had two distinct, though closely related, moments. In the first moment, she saw the Virgin with a dress of white silk and a veil of the same color draped to the floor. On her head was a crown of twelve stars. Her feet rested on a half sphere, trampling the head of a snake; in her hands she held a sphere with a cross on top of it and her eyes were lifted toward heaven. Her fingers were adorned with rings of various sized stones that sent rays of light toward the floor. The Virgin was surrounded by an oval, which contained the following words: *O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you.* Catherine listened to the Virgin’s voice as she interpreted the meaning of the globe and of the rays. The Virgin asked her to have a medal struck, which would represent the vision that had just occurred, and finally the Virgin expressed her joy in bestowing abundant graces on those who request them and on those who confidently wear the Medal.

⁹ Jean Guittou, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

The second moment of the same apparition was Catherine's vision of the reverse side of the Medal. She saw the letter "M" and two hearts united by a cross. Days later, also during prayer, Catherine heard the voice that responded to her concern on how the reverse side of the Medal should be: *The "M" and the two hearts say enough.*

Catherine remained silent about those visions during the 40 years of her hidden life and work in Reuilly. Except for her spiritual director, Fr. Aladel, and Sr. Dufès, at the end of Catherine's life, no one else suspected the identity of the visionary of the Virgin.

b) A re-reading of St. Catherine's visions

The same cautious position that the Church has taken with regard to so-called supernatural phenomena (visions, apparitions, private revelations) should be taken with regard to the narration of St. Catherine. From this position of the Church, one can undertake a re-reading that is both critical and respectful of the message of the Rue du Bac.

In-depth psychology has something to say in this respect, especially if we are attentive to certain circumstances that were recounted by the visionary.

On 21 April 1830 Catherine entered in the seminary. Four days later, she took part in the solemn translation of St. Vincent's relics from the Cathedral of Paris to the Chapel where they rest at the present time. Eight hundred Daughters of Charity participated in this event.

The translation of the relics was followed by a novena before the relics, a novena in which Catherine participated. It was during this novena that she saw the Saint's heart in a reliquary that had been placed on the altar of the chapel of the Rue du Bac. The exposed relic was a piece of the forearm, since at that time the heart was preserved in Lyon. The interpretation that Catherine gave to the vision of the different colors of Vincent's heart, and that she related to the tragic imminent events, was put in writing 26 years after these events had passed.

On 18 July, day of the Virgin's first apparition during the night, the Sister Directress of the Seminary had spoken to the Seminary Sisters about devotion to the saints and the Virgin. Catherine said that she was inspired by this conference and had a great desire to see the Virgin. The Directress had distributed to each sister a relic of the Saint — a piece of cloth — that Catherine swallowed. She said: *I fell asleep with the thought that St. Vincent would give me the grace of seeing the Virgin.* Then she immediately began her narration of the first apparition. With regard to the boy that accompanied the Virgin, Catherine said: *I*

*believe that the boy was my guardian angel ... because I had prayed often for the favor of this vision.*¹⁰

All these events raise some questions: Was this an authentic vision that Catherine narrated? Was it a dream? A subjective or objective vision? Was it symbolic or real? Did she really see the Virgin or was this a product of her imagination? Laurentin himself asked these questions.¹¹ The arguments and explanations that this theologian offers may or may not be convincing; in my opinion they are weak. But he assures us that he has studied these topics seriously and analyzed the documents rigorously and that he has reached the following conclusion: *The apparitions were sincere experience of St. Catherine ... The authenticity of her life confirms the truth of the apparitions,*¹² *and I myself consider them to be authentic.*¹³ Fr. Pierre Coste, secretary and archivist of the Congregation of the Mission (1873-1935), an historian whom some consider to be a rationalist, would be one of the first people to take an opposing position.¹⁴ At the beginning, Fr. Aladel did not give much importance to Catherine's story.

A reflection on the apparitions and visions, made by theologians who would not be labeled "rationalists," might arrive at the following conclusion. St. Catherine had extraordinary spiritual experiences. The visions that she had of the Lord and of the Virgin could not have been corporal because their condition of having been glorified surpasses corporality. That does not mean that they were not real. They were subjective sincere experiences that could have been stimulated by external supernatural causes. That is, they were not produced by the visionary's imagination but were the result of a special intervention of God. It must also be noted that Catherine might have been psychologically predisposed for such visions. Such personal mystical experiences could only have been perceived and experienced by her, and not the other sisters who were gathered together in community prayer. For such spiritual phenomenon are not perceived through the eyes or the ears but through an interior personal perception. Laurentin affirms that:

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹¹ Cf. R. Laurentin, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-145.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁴ A note was directed to the Sacred Congregation of Rites (2 July 1930), asking it not to go forward with the canonization of Catherine. This note listed Catherine's defects, which were seen as impediments to canonization. The note gave no credence to the apparitions.

*... a private revelation, when it is auditory in nature, does not come from vibrations transmitted in the atmosphere and then captured by a third person. It goes directly to the sensations rather than the senses, to the perception itself rather than the organ of perception.*¹⁵

One could affirm then that the visions do not belong to the objective physical and corporal order but to the subjective and spiritual order.

On the other hand, it is necessary to state that although the Church has approved the liturgical celebration and the use of the Medal, this does not mean that the Church has recognized the authenticity of the apparitions. It simply means that said devotion is not contrary to the faith, and that such devotion can foster growth in the Christian life. St. Catherine was canonized because of the holiness of her life and not because of the apparitions that she narrated.

c) The sign of the Miraculous Medal

Under the title “the message of the Rue du Bac” one would have to include, logically, all that Catherine recounted in her stories concerning the different visions that she had. In fact, later history has been focused solely on the message surrounding the Medal. Catherine herself, during the period after the apparitions, was more concerned about being faithful to the Virgin’s request to have a medal struck than in the messages that she received in the other apparitions.

We are surprised by two facts about the medal: the richness of the symbols and the rapid diffusion of the medal.

*Let us suppose, writes J. Guitton, that someone requested a painter or a poet ... to make a Medal that contained the maximum number of teachings and that at the same time would entail the least number of design strokes and fewest symbols, and that the medal had to be intelligible for all Christians regardless of their culture ... Let us suppose that a competition was held for such a medal. It is probable that the results would have been inferior to the design of the Medal described by Catherine as a result of the apparitions. For it is difficult to concentrate more thoughts than are counted on this Medal.*¹⁶

¹⁵ R. Laurentin, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁶ J. Guitton, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

One of the arguments in favor of the authenticity of the vision of the Medal that St. Catherine has passed on to us is the fact that it is almost impossible that this young country woman, uncultured and with little knowledge of biblical and theological questions, could have invented such a story.¹⁷ The Medal contains the totality of Marian theology and the essential elements of Christian revelation. Some have called the Medal “a small bible” and “the catechism of the people.”

Without forcing the words of the text nor the symbols, certain biblical texts come to mind when reflecting on the Medal: the woman with the twelve stars, with the moon under her feet and crushing a snake as described in the book of Revelation;¹⁸ the promise of a descendant of a woman conquering Satan as made in the book of Genesis;¹⁹ the prophecy of the elderly Simeon in the temple: *And you yourself a sword will pierce* (the pierced heart);²⁰ the active presence of Mary at the culminating moment of the redemptive work of Jesus on Calvary²¹ (the cross with the “M” and the two hearts); the Immaculate Conception’s mystery proclaimed in the ejaculation “O Mary conceived without sin”; Mary’s function as intercessor and distributor of the gift of divine grace as seen at Cana²² (the globe in her hands and the open arms shedding rays of light on the earth); Mother of the Redeemer and of the redeemed (the Church) or the new Eve united to the new Adam announcing the birth of a new humanity (the two hearts and the cross with the “M,” the gesture of the extended arms and open hands shining light on the sphere at the Virgin’s feet, or the circle of twelve stars as symbol of the twelve apostles etc.).

As we said before, when a private revelation is authentic, the only thing that has to be done is confirm its basis in Biblical revelation. In the case of the Medal, it reminds us of the redemptive work of Christ — the mystery of love and suffering — and the inseparable collaboration of the Mother of God, which the Medal represents in a symbolical and simple manner.

¹⁷ In the Church at Fain-les-Moutiers there is a painting of the Immaculate Virgin with characteristics that are very similar to the Virgin depicted on the Medal. During her childhood, Catherine was able to contemplate on this image of the Virgin.

¹⁸ Cf. Rv 12.

¹⁹ Cf. Gn 3:15

²⁰ Lc 2:35.

²¹ Cf. Jn 19:25-27.

²² Cf. Jn 2:1-12.

A re-reading of the Medal must take into consideration the Church's teaching on Marian devotion and cult. Paul VI published the Apostolic Exhortation, *Marialis cultus* (1974) for the purpose of promoting renewal of devotion to Mary. In it he emphasized a solid devotion based on the figure of Mary in the Scriptures and in the Liturgy. At the same time, he defended the manifestations of Marian devotions that the simple people practice.²³

John Paul II published the Encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* in 1987 as a preparation for the Marian Year of 1988. In it he highlighted the place of Mary in the mystery of Christ and the Church and he put the focus on her condition as a pilgrim of faith. These two documents of the Popes are simply an echo of what had been proclaimed and taught in the eighth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*. A re-reading of the Medal's symbols in light of this new teaching of the Church can give a solid biblical foundation to Marian devotion and place this devotion in the broader context of our faith, that is, in the mystery of Christ and the Church.

Another fact that is surprising in the history of the Medal is the quick dissemination of this among the people. On 30 June 1832, the silversmith Vachette handed over the first 1500 medals. He had received the order for these medals from Fr. Aladel. Catherine, when she saw it said: *do not change anything and begin to distribute them*, even though she expressed her disagreement because the globe was not presented in the hands of the Virgin in the way that she had seen it in the apparition.²⁴ Many more medals were struck, not only in Paris but also in other cities and nations. Between 1832 and 1836, 12 million medals were distributed in France alone. It is impossible to calculate the number of medals that have been distributed throughout the world. To acquire and wear a medal of the Virgin is synonymous with devotion to the Miraculous Medal.

The Daughters of Charity were responsible for this rapid dissemination of the Medal for they distributed it in their hospitals and schools. In 1836, the Archbishop of Paris wrote a letter inviting all the faithful to wear the Medal. On 7 December 1838, Pope Gregory XIV gave his approval to the distribution of this Medal.

Yet all of this does not explain the rapid and prodigious dissemination of the Medal. First of all we must look at the need for symbols that poor simple people have in expressing their faith. Through symbols and signs one passes from the visible to the invisible — this same movement from the visible to the

²³ In a letter dated 31 December 1976, Pope Paul VI wrote to Mother Rogé: "I am happy to invite the Company of the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission to use your great inheritance (the Medal) in such a way that it enriches the People of God and thus brings to life the points that I have outlined in my Apostolic Letter, *Marialis cultus*."

²⁴ Cf. R. Laurentin, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

invisible through use of symbols is also a reality in the celebration of the sacraments. Psychology and theological reflection point out today the importance of symbols and signs as people attempt to express their faith and root their faith in every day realities. The medal presents people with clear and simple symbols: the heart, the cross, the maternal gesture of the open arms that receive and give, good and evil, grace, sin, joy and pain. Jean Guitton writes:

*The Medal consists in this: it is a symbol of everything; ... it is a sign of union. ... A wise person and an ignorant person, a believer and a non-believer can wear it. ... Ratisbonne mockingly thought that the medal meant nothing and in an instant, it meant everything for him.*²⁵

Guitton made the following affirmation that inspired the title of his book: *The meaning of these symbols, the surpassing of all superstition.*²⁶

Many conversions and cures were attributed to the Medal and this also accounts for the rapid spread of this devotion. This sign, which helped to bring about the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (1854), become known among the people as the Miraculous Medal. It cannot be denied that God allowed the Medal to serve as a mediator for his action and his saving grace. Nevertheless, a re-reading of the message of Rue du Bac should not focus on the miraculous aspect of the Medal for in doing so one runs the risk of presenting the medal as a superstitious or magical object. A re-reading of the message of the Medal ought to include a revision of certain expressions and devotions that focus on the miraculous aspect of the Medal and at the same ought to emphasize the fact that Mary is the path that leads to Christ — the same as is seen at Cana: *Do whatever he tells you.*²⁷

A re-reading of the actual message of Rue du Bac that is focused on the Medal as its privileged expression ought to consider the following two affirmations. The theologian R. Larentin states:

The medal is an auxiliary sign of contemplation and commitment. It is not an obligatory sign or a necessary sign for salvation. It is one of those helps that Christians can use to assist them in their journey

²⁵ Jean Guitton, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁷ In the dialogue with Laurentin that followed the conference he gave in Salamanca during the Ninth Week of Vincentian Studies (9-13 July 1980), he spoke of leaving aside the miraculous aspect of the Medal and focusing on the hidden life of service of Catherine. It was this life of service, he said, that proved the authenticity of the apparitions. He added: the visionary, after the last visit she made to the chapel of the Rue de Bac, on returning to her house in Reuilly, fell and broke her arm.

*of faith. It is like those signs of friendship — a photo or a letter kept in the wallet or desk drawer.*²⁸

The second is from Guitton “*No one is obliged to go to Rue de Bac, nor to admit that Sr. Catherine saw the Blessed Virgin, nor that this Medal is miraculous, that it brings good luck or even less that it controls the laws of the cosmos.*”²⁹

But the same author wrote a book about the message of the Rue du Bac to show the necessity of faith in external revelation. The Miraculous Medal is one of these revelations. Intentionally, the book is entitled, *The Rue de Bac or the Superstition Surpassed*.

III. A re-reading of the message at the beginning of the third millennium

Any re-reading of the message of Rue du Bac must be done in the light of new situations in the world and in the Church. God speaks to us through the signs of the times. As said in the beginning of this conference, a re-reading of the message of the Medal should not attempt to answer all the challenges of the third millennium. Rather, a new reading of the message should help us to interpret, listen to and respond to these new situations. This re-reading of the symbols and their meaning in light of the historical realities at the beginning of this third millennium gives coherency to the Medal’s message.

Where should the Miraculous Medal Association today put its emphasis as a response to the call that John Paul II directed to the entire Church in his letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001)? Because it is a Church association it must embrace all the joys and hopes and missionary concerns and pastoral orientations of the Church. This is stated very clearly in the letter that the Pope wrote to bishops, priests, religious and laity

In this letter, John Paul II invites us to give thanks to God for all the graces that have been bestowed on us during the Jubilee year 2000. Also, the Pope looks to the future and formulates some *lines of action* that will renew and revitalize the mission of the Church in the third millennium. So that this might become a reality the Pope calls *for an effective post-Jubilee pastoral plan*.³⁰ From all of the suggestions of this letter, what are the ones that the Association ought to assume as we re-read the message of the Medal?

²⁸ R. Laurentin, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

²⁹ Cf. J. Guitton, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³⁰ *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 15.

Reflecting on two different moments of the message of the Rue du Bac, we will attempt to organize these suggestions in two groups.

a) “Come to the foot of the altar; here graces will be given to those who ask”

St. Catherine listened to these words of the Virgin on the night of 18 July 1930.

In Catholic liturgy, the altar represents Christ. Therefore, drawing near to Christ and the way to achieve this closeness and the consequences of this encounter with Christ constitute the central part of the Pope’s letter and form the first lines of action that ought to enlighten all the pastoral projects of the Church in the third millennium.

The Pope encourages us to *use all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom*, but at the same time, he warns us of the danger of “*doing for the sake of doing*” and the danger of believing that the results depend on our efforts and plans. Without Christ, we can do nothing.³¹ *We are certainly not seduced by the naïve expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person (Christ), and the assurance that he gives us: I am with you!*³²

Therefore, the second chapter of the Pope’s letter is dedicated to the theme of the contemplation of the face of Christ because, *the men and women of our time — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to “speak” of Christ, but in a certain sense to “show” him to them.*³³ By this Christ act of contemplation and love, the Christian life will be renewed and strengthened. Jesus is the only firm rock upon which we can build our lives and this same Jesus invites us to continue his mission.

Admitting the centrality of Christ, all pastoral programs ought to prioritize and promote holiness as the vocation of all Christians from the time of their baptism.³⁴ In other words, *to ask catechumens: “Do you wish to receive*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

³² *Ibid.*, 29.

³³ *Ibid.*, 16.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

baptism?” means at the same time to ask them: “Do you wish to become holy?”³⁵ Immediately the Pope presents prayer as the pedagogy for holiness.³⁶

At the start of this third millennium, the Pope invites all Christians to a *renewed commitment to prayer*.³⁷ Being persons of prayer is not something that is reserved only to consecrated religious.

It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life. Especially in the face of the many trials to which today’s world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but “Christians at risk.” They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of “substitutes,” accepting alternative religious proposals and even indulging in far-fetched superstitions. The Pope then goes on to say: It is therefore essential that education in prayer should become in some way a key point of all pastoral planning.³⁸ That is why he asks the Christian communities to become genuine “schools” of prayer.³⁹

The call to holiness and the call to be people of prayer ought to orient the life of every Christian.⁴⁰ The same can be said of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation: [participation in these sacraments] *is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life.*⁴¹ In light of the temptation to develop a spirituality that is individualistic, and otherworldly, the Pope reminds us of the ethical-social demands of the faith and of the need to be witnesses of the faith — this being demanded of us by Christian charity and the mystery of the Incarnation.⁴²

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35-37.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 52.

All these lines of action that the Pope sets forth for the whole Church in the third millennium are not foreign to the message of the Rue de Bac. Certainly, the Association of the Miraculous Medal has to promote authentic devotion to Mary. But the invitation *to come to the foot of the altar and to ask for abundant graces* is above all an invitation to draw nearer to Christ and to pray. The symbols on the reverse side of the medal, the cross and the “M,” confirm the expression *to Jesus through Mary*.

The Association has to promote authentic devotion to Mary. This means in the first place to locate this devotion in the place that it rightly occupies within the mystery of Christ and the Christian faith. There, she is the perfect follower of her Son, the first Christian, on a pilgrimage of faith like us. She was totally committed to the Lord and, therefore, an example for all the disciples of her Son.

Here I will make two brief observations and deductions in relation to what has been said so far. First, devotion to Mary is an important part of our faith. For this reason we have Marian dogmas — and this is not some mere coincidence as might be devotion to some particular saint. For while we can revitalize devotions, such as the Miraculous Medal, the Brown Scapular, etc, the same cannot be said of our Marian devotion and cult. Second, the Virgin promised St. Catherine that abundant blessings would be given to those who asked with confidence and who wear the Medal. This, however, does not give them any security with regard to their temporal or eternal life. The Medal and the prayers do not excuse us from living a Christian life nor do they free us from the risks and dangers to which all human beings are exposed. It has been said that authentic devotees of the Miraculous Medal “have moved beyond mere superstition.” It is hoped that these words express a reality and not simply some good intention.

Besides the lines of action presented by the Pope, we must also consider the challenges presented by our Superior General, Fr. Maloney, to lay Vincentians: *Be authentic believers of the Word of God and practice it. Be well formed. Be Saints*. Directing himself directly to the lay people of the Association of the Miraculous Medal he says:

*Practice an authentic devotion to Mary whom the Vincentian Family knows as the Miraculous Virgin (...). Make your local community a place of prayer and of ongoing formation — including the social doctrine of the Church — and a place of mutual support in the faith.*⁴³

b) “She held in her hands a sphere that represented the world”

⁴³ R Maloney, “Mensaje a la Asociación de la Medalla Milagrosa de España” in *Anales*, July-August 1994, p. 290.

St. Catherine's description of the second apparition of Mary, that which gave origin to the Miraculous Medal, highlights two aspects of Mary: the Virgin presents the world to God symbolized by the sphere that she holds in her hands and the rays of light emanating to the sphere upon which her feet rest.

Several of these priorities have a direct relationship with our identity as Vincentians, and with our mission in the world and in the Church. An important aspect of the message of Rue de Bac is that the one who received and transmitted the message of the Virgin was a Daughter of Charity, a member of the Vincentian Family.

To speak of the Vincentian Family is to talk about people who are sent to the poor, about people who are called to take on the role of an "apostle of charity" both in the Church and in the world. Such is the sign of our Christian Vincentian identity.

The third part of the Letter of the Pope is entitled "Witness of Love." It begins with these words of Jesus: *this is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*⁴⁴ If we have truly contemplated the face of Jesus, our pastoral programs will be inspired by the new commandment. *Love one another as I have loved you.*

John Paul II echoing the words of St. Paul says: *Many things are necessary for the Church's journey through history, not least in this new century, but without charity (agape), all will be in vain.*⁴⁵ To be witnesses of love at the start of the third millennium and in the situations in which the Church finds itself, means, as the Pope states, that the world is bound together in a *spirituality of communion among all the people of God,*⁴⁶ is bound together through the ecumenical movement,⁴⁷ through interreligious dialogue,⁴⁸ and through pastoral ministry that is focused on the promotion of family life, vocations and lay ministry.⁴⁹ The attitude of Mary, offering the world (which she holds in her hands) to God and the bright rays descending from her hands to the sphere on which her feet rest should not be seen as unintelligible symbols. These spheres and the twelve stars are symbols that express totality and unity.

⁴⁴ Jn 13:35.

⁴⁵ *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 42.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-45.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

Two affirmations of the Pope ought to find an echo in the Vincentian Family:

1st: The century and the millennium now beginning will need to see, and hopefully with still greater clarity, to what length of dedication the Christian community can go in charity toward the poor.⁵⁰

The fidelity of the Church to Christ is revealed in the preferential option for the poor and in a charity that is practiced as much as or more than in faithfulness to doctrine.

2nd: Charity demands a greater creativity. Now is the time for new “creativity” in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by “getting close” to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters.... The proclamation of the gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communication. The charity of works ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words.⁵¹

Even with a limited knowledge of Vincentian doctrine, the words of the Pope bring to mind the words of Vincent de Paul. For example, “greater creativity” and “creativity in charity” are an echo of “love, inventive unto infinity”; “the humiliating handout” reminds us of the fact that “our work for the poor must not be just charity but justice”; “the charity of works ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words” seems to refer us to Vincent’s words “affective love becomes effective in our service to the poor.” We see, then, that the Pope himself is suggesting to all Vincentians a re-reading of the message of the Rue du Bac.

The globe in the hands of the Virgin represents the world. The rays of light extending from the Virgin’s open hands are symbols of God’s grace. These symbols represent the hopes and desires of the Pope to promote in the world “the civilization of love” and “a culture of solidarity.” Fr. Maloney echoes these words when he invites all lay Vincentians:

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

*Be creative ... be inventive in the service of the needs that you discover ... Let the works of charity and justice and peace shine forth from the missions of our Vincentian Family.*⁵²

The Vincentian Family is composed of millions of members who belong to the distinct branches of the great tree of charity. It is not an impossible dream to imagine the formation of a network of charity that embraces the whole world. Indeed, an example of this dream can be seen concretely in the attempts by the Vincentian Family to form such a network to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth. In light of the globalization of the economy — and consequently the globalization of poverty — the Vincentian Family desires to take up the challenge of globalizing charity.

Are not the advances in technology calling us as Vincentians — and especially the millions of members of the Miraculous Medal Association — to bind ourselves together in a network of creative charity on behalf of the poor?

Conclusion

A re-reading of the message of the Rue de Bac is necessary if we do not want the message to remain restricted to a certain time and place in the past. While it is true that the private revelation of St. Catherine is not part of the truths of the Great Revelation, nevertheless, it is part of the charismatic and prophetic dimension of the Church.

A re-reading that attempts to make the message come alive in our time must respect the essential elements of the message and not fall victim to individual whims and fancies. At the same time, if the re-reading of this message is to be truly prophetic and avoid archeological sclerosis and fundamentalism, then it must be re-read in light of the “signs of the time,” of the new situation and teaching of the Church and in light of theology, biblical exegesis and the human sciences. We have attempted to re-read the message with the above in mind.

Perhaps we have forced the meaning of two textual phrases of the message, but I believe we have not introduced anything foreign into the symbols of the Medal. Above all, we have emphasized the coherency of these symbols with the lines of action that the Pope has proposed to be included in all pastoral programs of the Church community. The Miraculous Medal Association is one of these programs. It is good to end this conference by restating our confidence in the powerful intercession of the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal and to ask her for the grace to know how to concretize the lines of action that the Pope has set before the Church at the beginning of this third millennium.

⁵² Cf. Robert P. Maloney, *Anales*, March-April 2001, pp. 187-188.

(CHARLES T. PLOCK, C.M., translator)

A Short History of the Mission House in Panningen (Holland) and the Missionaries Who Were Sent from There to the Missions

*by Giel Peeters, C.M.
Province of Holland*

It was on 18 October 1880 that the Minor Seminary “St. Vincentius,” which a few years earlier had been opened at Loos in France, was transferred to Wernhoutsburg (Zundert) by Jules Ferry, because of persecution of the Church in France. The intention was that their formation would be completed later in Paris. After several Dutchmen in France had already entered the Congregation, more and more Dutch boys, wanting to become missionaries, asked now to be allowed to enter Wernhoutsburg to do their studies. But these students (the ones chosen by lot for military service) ran into trouble with Dutch legislation, being forced to remain in the country. Therefore a place was sought for them to give them priestly formation within the Netherlands, in Limburg or Brabant. Fr. Willem Meuffels, professor in Wernhoutsburg, went in 1903 with his plans to Bishop Drehmans of Roermond, and it was this bishop who pointed out to him the convent buildings of St. Joseph in Panningen, which the Sisters of the Precious Blood were going to leave. On 25 June, before the notary, Oscar Haffmans, Fr. Jean Gracieux, superior of Wernhoutsburg, signed the deed of purchase, by which it was agreed that the nunnery with its garden would effectively come into the possession of the priests on 15 July.

Although the Dutch candidates were in a majority, both houses remained part of the French Province and were, in their program and operating system, completely modeled after the French way. In France itself the persecution of the Church continued relentlessly in these months. Religious personnel were pushed out of major seminaries, colleges, etc. For this reason, the Superior General had ample choice in providing professors for Panningen. On 15 July the Sisters of the Precious Blood left for Aarle Rixtel and two days later Fr. Henri Romans with two brothers were in Panningen to take possession of the first pieces of furniture and other necessities. A few days later the first superior of the house, Fr. Hubert Meuffels arrived. He would be in charge of the house for 23 years. On 27 September, the house had 32 residents: 8 priests, 9 students, 9 novices and 6 brothers.

For the second time the persecution of the Church in France had an important influence on the development of the recently founded house in Panningen. The situation in France became increasingly difficult and there was the fear that the radical socialist government in France would suppress the Congregations altogether. Where to go with the students and novices of the Motherhouse in Paris? In 1907, the Superior General at that time, Fr. Antoine

Fiat, wrote: “My confidence is not wavering, but Providence requires that we take our precautions. I request, as soon as possible, a meeting with your architect and your contractor and push for an energetic continuation of building, as planned for the rest of the house.” The then-feared banishment fortunately did not take place.

On 23 April the laying of the foundation stone took place. The extension of the building to about double its size continued at a speedy pace. On 24 June 1908, in the new chapel, the first five new priests got ordained. Many would follow and in the course of the years, a total of over 450 young men received the priesthood. About 70% of this number left as missionaries for abroad and the others received an assignment in the Netherlands.

Until 1921 the Motherhouse decided about the destinations of the young priests and appointed them to the numerous missions entrusted to her care. They swarmed out over the whole world: China, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Central America, North America, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Madeira, Indonesia, France, Congo, Iceland and Curaçao.

The First World War became the cause of the erection of a separate Dutch Province. The Motherhouse in Paris could no longer sustain the financial burden and thought was given to the idea of closing the houses in the Netherlands, unless these were prepared to support themselves. All this resulted in the erection of an independent Dutch Province on 19 March 1921. The first provincial superior was Fr. Henri Romans. From that moment, Wermhoutsburg and Panningen lost their international character.

After 1921 many missionaries went to the regions of our own province: Brazil, China (later Taiwan), Indonesia and Ethiopia. Representatives of these mission areas will be present at the feast of our first centenary.

We celebrate this centenary feast together with the people of Helden, Panningen and the surrounding villages because we owe them a lot. Not only did 37 candidates from these communities enter the Congregation, but also because of the substantial help we received from their inhabitants.

There is much to look back upon in gratitude, although heavy sacrifices also had to be made. In the first years seven young students and a young brother died. Among the priests ordained in Panningen, a good number of missionaries lost their lives, because of accidents, violence or illness, before they were 50 years old. Frans van Meerendonk, 39 years, died in China of smallpox (1913); Emile Roussez, 31 years, typhoid fever in China (1913); Gerard Vester, 32 years, returned mortally ill from China (1918) and two months later his brother Henri

Vester, 26 years, died at sea while traveling to Guatemala (1918); Guillaume Janssen, 33 years, drowned in Bolivia (1918); Antoon Mommers, 29 years, typhus in China (1920); Johann Nass, 30 years, China (1922); Nico Suylen, 47 years, La Paz (1923); Johan Aben, 32 years old, died of yellow fever in Brazil (1923); after a few years of mission life in the Netherlands Jeroen Litjens, 31 years (1924), and Jan Stevens, 37 years (1929), died; Piet Romme, 27 years, dysentery China (1927); Laurens Vonk, 33 years, typhus in China (1930); Cornelis de Wit, 49 years, Ethiopia (1936); Nico de Graaf, 48 years, El Salvador (1933); Johan Lamers, 45 years, China (1934); Kees van Hal, 46 years, malaria Indonesia (1936); Jan Vonken, 45 years, Quito (1936); André Weda, 29 years, typhus Indonesia (1937); Gerard Wouters, 28 years, together with Msgr. Schraven and Brother Geerts, murdered in China (1937); Kees Beekmans, 29 years, typhus Brazil (1941); Willem van Dirven, 47 years, China (1941); Gerard van Ravensteyn, 44 years, fallen in battle on the Java Sea (1942); Nico Dames, 32 years, concentration camp China (1943); Jacques Bruno, 49 years, car accident in Indonesia (1946); Harrie Boots, 30 years, drowned on the eve of his departure for Taiwan (1961); Herman Vonk, 41 years, Congo (1969); Sjaak van Helden, 45 years, Ethiopia (1974); Nico Corveleyn, 46 years, Curaçao (1978); Harrie Krechting, 45 years, Congo (1979); Fons van Bavel, 44 years, Ethiopia (1979); Theo Hunnekens, 43 years, Ethiopia (1987).

A special mention for those who were killed because of violence or murder

- Henri Vester, 26 years old, died while travelling to Guatemala in sight of the shore, probably because of a robbery (1918);
- Gerard Wouters, 28 years old, together with Msgr Frans Schraven, almost 64 years old, and Br. Antoon Geerts, 62 years old, killed by Japanese soldiers in China;
- Gerard van Ravensteijn, 44 years old, died in the battle of the Java Sea against the Japanese in 1942;
- Nico Dames, 32 years old, died in a concentration camp in China (1943);
- Jos Theunissen, 63 years old, murdered in 1950 in China;
- Nico van Kleef, 52 years old, murdered by a Panamanian soldier in 1989.

2003. It has become silent in the Mission House. Where once many young people prepared themselves in silence, or sometimes noisily, for their ideal to go out to work somewhere, now the elderly receive their well-earned rest and nursing care. We ourselves cannot send out any more missionaries, but in satisfaction we can look back upon the young provinces in Indonesia, Brazil and Ethiopia, who now in their own country and in their own way work in the vineyard of the Lord, under the maxim which St. Vincent gave to us: *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me*. He sent me out to bring the joyous message to the poor.

Originale

“Singing Vincent de Paul’s Song” 100 Years in the Curitiba Province

*by Eugênio Wisniewski, C.M.
and Simão Valenga, C.M.
Province of Curitiba*

Fr. Robert Maloney, the 22nd successor to St. Vincent de Paul, visited the Curitiba Province from 1-5 July 2003 on the occasion of the centenary of the arrival of the first Polish missionaries to Brazil. His ministry, according to our Constitutions, consists in giving continuity to the mission of our Founder and maintaining the charism of St. Vincent so that it may always be alive in the Church.

Fr. Maloney stood before the orchestra, opened the score and announced: *Let’s sing the song of St. Vincent de Paul today.* Later, in the homily for the Vincentian Family on 2 July, he said: *I ask you to celebrate with me ... not just by remembering St. Vincent, but by making his holiness your own, by singing his song.* Afterwards he pointed out the words and the music of the song:

1. “Sing deeply spiritual song.”

It seems like a well-known refrain, but it needs to be lived out well. He said to the Vincentian Family: *If we learn to live in the presence of the Lord, to ponder his word, and to love him deeply, then we will surely sing a deeply spiritual song in life.* He pointed out certain notes: *Spend some time each day with the Lord in silent, meditative prayer.*

Following the arrangement of the composition, on 3 July, he “challenged” the confreres of the province to be “doers of the word” by playing seven notes of the musical scale: organizing collaborative projects with the members of the Vincentian Family in the service of the poor; editing a Vincentian Prayer Book adapted to our own culture; using the *Practical Guide for the Local Superior*; promoting MISEVI; forming the advisors of our Vincentian lay groups, especially youth groups; preparing well for the Provincial and General Assemblies; and promoting vocations.

He repeated his message several times. To the Vincentian students he said: *During the time of formation, make the person of Jesus, the Evangelizer of the Poor, the center of your lives.* To the students of the Vincentian Institute of Philosophy he insisted: *These years [of study] are a very important time in your lives, a unique opportunity to focus your time and energy on eating the word of God ... making it a part of yourself. Ongoing formation in the mystery of God must be a part of the life of every one of us. Only in this way will learn to say*

with the Apostle Thomas: *My Lord and my God*, and to say to others: *Let us go along with him, to die with him.*

In the centenary homily on 4 July, in Tomás Coelho, he said: *I ask you to let the Lord touch you, and me, on this anniversary.* Let him touch our eyes so our vision might be broader; our ears that we may hear the words of the gospel and the cry of the poor; our tongues that we may strengthen our brothers in the faith; our affectivity that we may be able to express our love for others in a mature and constructive way; our hearts that we may accept his love for us.

On 5 July, the Superior General suggested to the Daughters of Charity a higher range, more like first and second sopranos: *Nourish your friendship and love deeply.* Nourish your friendship with God, your friendship with the poor, your friendship the other Vincentian groups, your mutual friendship. Love with creative love, in the higher ranges, raising yourselves up as though on eagle's wings: respond to the call of the Vincentian Family with formation, prayer and practical service; form youth groups; create a vocation culture based on a positive image of yourselves and of your vocation, with the support of the community, by way of personal contact, by an invitation to *come and see* and prayer for vocations.

2. “Sing a liberation song.”

The invitation to the Vincentian Family was the invitation to be the echo of a new sound: a question of perceiving and carrying out new harmonies. *Be a bearer of good news. Bring the Spirit of the Lord with you wherever you go.* But one must be attentive to the chords: Be a bearer of good news. Bring the Spirit of the Lord with you wherever you go: *In the presence of a person filled with God's Spirit, people come alive. They dream new dreams and see new visions. The Spirit of the Lord inflames something in their hearts. They begin to hear the deepest voices of reality. They begin to see the possibility of a new heaven and a new earth. They become freed from the inner bonds that hold them back and become eager to pour out their lives with a new and deeper generosity.* In this time of historical ups and downs, of chaos and darkness, he has urged us all: *do not be afraid.*

To the students he left this refrain: *Allow the Lord to set you free.* Jesus wants his followers to rejoice with the *glorious freedom of the children of God.* Free, by means of your vows to be at the service of the poor, to be mobile and flexible, to be available. Freedom which implies a love at once *reckless but disciplined.* *Search for and find the crucified Lord today in his crucified people and live in solidarity with him in them.*

3. “Let your song be not just a solo, but a harmonious and mighty chorus.”

Sing with one another in prayer. Sing with one another in action. Let the Vincentian Family be, in a world influenced by individualism, a sign of how important it is to work and pray together. Let it be a harmonious symphony, a song of service, a liberation song, a wake-up song in the world. Join the poor in your song. Join young people in it too. Let it be a rousing, beautiful, melodic hymn, and let it be a mighty chorus resounding to the glory of God and ringing out as good news in the ears of the poor.

The Superior General reminded our Provincial Council that the future of the Church lies in the action of the laity. They are part of the essence of the Church. Our charism should be shared with the laity. We should work diligently for the formation of the laity, not only because of the shortage of vocations, but above all, because it is their right.

The orchestra members as well as the general public had their grandest moment when they were invited to dream new compositions, new chords, new symphonies in the way the 12 apostles or the first Polish missionaries in southern Brazil dreamed. And so, *as we celebrate this anniversary it is important for us to dream too.* Dream that the chains of poverty are broken, that the blind eyes of the world are opened to the hungry, that the silent ones who suffer oppression shout for joy because they are experiencing a real liberation. With regard to the Congregation, dream that our life makes known the Good News, that our community life is a sign of the Kingdom that is within reach, that our prayer be such that young people wish to be part of it, that our charism take root in new missions and new countries. *So our dreams must become true in life ... Wherever the Lord goes, wherever his missionaries arrive, wherever the Kingdom of God penetrates the lives of people they are renewed.*

And this was the final note: *Dream bold, adventurous dreams today as members of the Vincentian Family and ask the Lord to renew the heart of each of us so that we might be courageous as missionaries in making those dreams come true.*

4. Facts and Impressions

The Superior General's arrival was eagerly awaited, but he arrived on stage with the lights turned low. He was supposed to arrive at 11:10 p.m. on a flight from Sao Paulo to Curitiba, but he did not land until 3:00 in the morning. Because of thick fog the Curitiba airport was closed. The flight was redirected to Joinville, about 100 kilometers from Curitiba. The Visitor and the Provincial Treasurer went to pick him up by car. After almost 30 hours of travel the curtains of the stage were opened.

This particular spectacle had a kind of rehearsal ahead of time. The centenary of the arrival of the first Polish missionaries in Southern Brazil was opened on 25 October 2002, on the occasion of a CLAPVI meeting and with the presence of the Vicar General, Fr. José Ignacio Fernández de Mendoza.

The jubilee was celebrated on 4 July when the first four Polish missionaries (Frs. Boleslau Bayer, Francisco Chylaszuk, Hugo Dylla and Brother Alexandre Wengrzen) established themselves in the Polish immigrant community of Tomás Coelho area (Araucária, Parana). The Superior General, Fr. Maloney, presided at the Eucharist, which was concelebrated by the three Vincentian bishops of the Province: Domingos Wisniewski, Ladislau Biernaski and Izidoro Kosinski, as well as many confreres of the province. Frs. Eli Chaves, Ari Alves dos Santos, Arkadiusz Zakręta and Antonio González, the Visitors of Rio, Fortaleza, Poland and Venezuela respectively were also present. The Daughters of Charity and the coordinators of the branches of the Vincentian Family also participated.

Representatives of the 24 parishes that encompass the 430 communities attended by the Curitiba Province had their opportunity to celebrate the centenary on Sunday, 6 July, at a very festive mass presided by the Archbishop of Curitiba, Pedro M. Fedalto.

The Superior General gave a number of conferences to the confreres of Curitiba and also to the seminarians of the three Brazilian provinces who came together for the National Gathering of Vincentian Students. He celebrated the Eucharist with the Vincentian Family and with the students and faculty of the Vincentian Institute of Philosophy. He dedicated a day to the Daughters of Charity. He also unveiled the plaque commemorating his visit at the new buildings of the Vincentian Institute of Philosophy and he inaugurated the Centenary Memorial.

Unfortunately he could not be present for the performance of the complete work. Other people in other places awaited him. Just as his arrival was discreet, so was his departure. For at the same hour that Sunday, the Archbishop, with the participation of the communities, was celebrating the Jubilee Mass. But his presence in the partial performance of the work was more than enough to satisfy the audience and make them wish for his return.

(JOSEPH CUMMINS, C.M., translator)

Vincentian Bibliography

RIYARTO ARMADA, C.M.

80th Romo-Romo CM Di Indonesia

(80 Years of the Vincentian Fathers in Indonesia)

Dicetak oleh Percetakan DIOMA, 268 pages

The *80th. Romo-Romo CM di Indonesia* is a book dedicated to the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the first Vincentian missionaries in Indonesia. The first Vincentian missionaries were from the Dutch Province. They were called by *Propaganda Fide* to do the mission in the Eastern part of Java Island (1923), precisely in Surabaya Diocese. The book consists of three parts: 1) the kaleidoscope of the Vincentian apostolates; 2) the panorama of the missionary activities of the Vincentians; and 3) the album of photos of the Vincentian priests and bishops (foreign missionaries and Indonesians). The book shows some touching experiences of the first Vincentian missionaries especially in starting missionary apostolates in the villages inside parts of Eastern Java: their difficulties, sufferings, failures, hopes. The sufferings during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia were well shared in the letters and stories written by the missionaries themselves. The book does not offer merely the marvelous achievements in the apostolates, such as the increasing number of conversions in the diocese (in the beginning there were only 40 native Catholics, now there are more than 300,000 Catholics), but also depicts some pains and failures that happened in their mission. Hopefully, by reading it, people may cultivate a missionary spirit like that of the first Vincentians. The concluding part of the kaleidoscope puts forward the future of the Vincentian mission in Indonesia. The CM province of Indonesia, created in 1958, is now a province which sends out missionaries.

LOURENÇO BIERNASKI, C.M.

Quem foram, o que fizeram, esses missionários...

(Who the missionaries were and what they did...)

Gráfica Vicentina Editora Ltda. EPP, Curitiba, Brazil, 2003, 266 pages

The Vincentians of the Curitiba Province are celebrating the first centenary of the arrival of the Polish confreres in Southern Brasil (Paraná), at the invitation of the first bishop of Curitiba, José de Camargo Barros, to care for the Polish immigrants in Paraná. In 1820 the Portuguese confreres had already come to Brazil; the French came later. The bishops entrusted the care of various diocesan seminaries to the Vincentians. In 1896 they were asked to direct the Seminary of Paraná in Curitiba. They remained there until 1961. Fr. Biernaski relates the biographies of 96 missionaries who helped forge the history of the Province of Curitiba. The first four were: Tomás Coelho, Francis Chylaszek, Hugo Dylla and Br. Alexandre Wengrzyn. Later on more missionaries came and

they had, over the years, the care of some 20 parishes. To preserve the memory of so many missionaries, Fr. Biernaski, the first Brazilian priest of the Curitiba Province, describes in 266 pages the lives of these confreres who, like Abraham, left their homeland without knowing what awaited them, but trusting fully in the One who called them. (Taken from the preface written by Msgr. Pedro Fedalto, Archbishop of Curitiba).

LUCIANO DA COSTA FERREIRA, C.M.

Carisma vicentino en Moçambique. Memória e testimonio
(*The Vincentian Charism in Mozambique: Memorial and Testimony*)
Escola Tipográfica das Missões – Cucujães, 2003, 560 pages

“The purpose of this book is to remember the many spiritual sons and daughters of St. Vincent who dedicated themselves to the mission and to charity in Mozambique. It seeks to offer to the new generations in formation and to the new missionaries who come from other countries and cultures trustworthy and useful historical references, which link the past and the present and help shape appropriate responses for the future. This book also wishes to give testimony, through the words and actions of many confreres and sisters, of how the Mozambican land and people are a privileged place for the living out of the Vincentian charism.” (Taken from the back cover of the book).

COLLECTION

Čas nam prinaša nove naloge. Lazaristi v Sloveniji 1852-2002
(*New Times Bring New Challenges: Lazarists in Slovenia 1852-2002*)
Zbornik, Sv. Jožef nad Celjem, 2003, 384 pages

In September of 2002 the Slovenian province of the CM celebrated 150 years of the arrival of the Vincentians in Slovenia. In 1852 Msgr. Anton Martin Slomsek, Bishop of Lavant (today Maribor) installed three Slovenian priests, who came from the Internal Seminary in Paris, in St. Joseph of Celje. This book brings together the presentations given in a symposium organized to celebrate this notable jubilee. Prepared by 17 confreres from the province together with outside collaborators, the presentations evaluate the past and present apostolates of the Province: popular missions, the preaching of retreats, work with the Vincentian Family, social commitment and their presence in the diaspora (Serbia, Macedonia, Kosovo), as well as their work with Slovenian immigrants in Argentina and Canada, etc. The book is amply documented with photographs and presents the basic lines of the Vincentian presence in Slovenia from 1852 up to our own time.

DIE VINZENTINER

1853-2003. 150 Jahre – Deutsche Provinz, 66 pages

On the occasion of the jubilee celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Province of Germany (1853-2003), a memorial booklet of its history has been published in German. In 66 pages, with beautiful black and white photos, it recalls briefly, among other things, the history, and some personalities, houses and works of the province. The booklet also contains the program of celebrations of which the principal events were held in Trier on 19 and 20 July.

GIUSEPPE GUERRA, C.M. and PROFESSOR MARIO GUERRA
Storia dei Missionari Vincenziani nell'Italia Meridionale
Dall'arrivo a Napoli (1668) al Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II (1962)
(The History of the Vincentian Missionaries in Southern Italy)
From the Arrival in Naples (1668) until the II Vatican Council (1962)
CLV – Edizione Vincenziane, Rome, Italy, 2003, 385 pages

“Life is richer than ideas.” This phrase, feely translated from Erasmus, spontaneously came into my head when I read the manuscript of this volume of the history of the Naples Province. It is not a conventional history based on documents of foundation and lists of houses and worthy confreres. The authors of this history “start from the timid first steps, but allow the decided missionary direction to shine through. While in France the provinces must be understood by taking into account the seminaries and the parishes entrusted to them by the king, in Italy, the only reason for the confreres’ presence was the missions and the activity on behalf of the clergy.” “The present writer is familiar with the archives the authors worked from, and therefore can testify that this work is well documented. There is a rich bibliography. The appendixes offer many more recent notes. It is a valuable book.” (Taken from the presentation, written by L. Mezzadri).

COLLECTION
Hacer efectivo el Evangelio y mundo actual
XXVII Semana de Estudios Vicencianos
(To Make the Gospel Effective and the Modern World)
XXVII Week of Vincentian Studies
CEME, Salamanca, Spain, 2002, 438 pages

“The book brings together the different presentations and seminars which took place during the XXVII Week of Vincentian Studies organized by the Salamanca Province of the C.M. Counting this one, there are now 44 volumes in CEME’s *Evangelizare* Collection. All the presentations, centering on St. Vincent’s well known and much discussed phrase: ‘To make the gospel effective,’ are interesting. Depending upon who each author is, each clearly wishes to make us understand what St. Vincent meant when he pronounced that famous phrase, and even more so when the phrase is taken from its original historical context. The work is preceded by an historical reflection on the Salamanca Vincentian Weeks which Fr. José Manuel Sanchez Mallo divides into

four phases; there are also nine conclusions to which the development of these same weeks has led. We must recognize the great good and the great interest these weeks have awakened in so many confreres.” (Taken from *Anales de la Congregación de la Misión y de las Hijas de la Caridad*, No.1, January-February 2003, p. 96).

LUIGI MEZZADRI, C.M.
Dizionario Storico Spirituale Vincenziano
(*Historical Spiritual Vincentian Dictionary*)
CLV-Edizioni Vincenziane
Rome, Italy, 2003, 484 pages

“A dictionary is a tool for navigation. Like a compass which shows us where we are going, this Dictionary gives us the coordinates of our point of departure, but also indicates the progress of our journey in space and time. I do not think a dictionary should tell us only what things St. Vincent did or said. The significance of the dictionary, then, is not that of being a fixed star immersed in the past, but rather a bridge which joins us to the flow of history and projects us into the future. The Dictionary has not limited itself, therefore, to referring to St. Vincent’s thoughts on basic themes and characteristics. It also strives to communicate a sense of forward movement, and to help people to feel themselves as protagonists in an ongoing adventure.” (Taken from the Author’s Introduction).

The Vincentian Translation Project team is pleased to announce that Volume 13, *Documents*, of *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents* is available, and that it is in two volumes, 13A and 13B. In these are found documents classified in five parts: I. “Documents pertaining to St. Vincent,” II. “Documents pertaining to the Congregation of the Mission,” III. “Documents Pertaining to the Confraternities of Charity,” IV. “Documents Pertaining to the Daughters of Charity,” and V. “Documents Pertaining to the Ladies of Charity.” For more information, please contact Sr. Marie Poole: mpoolevtp@juno.com

Collection. *Asociación de la Medalla Milagrosa. Una nueva imagen para un nuevo milenio*. Editorial La Milagrosa, Madrid, Spain, 2002, 247 pages.

— *Il Cardinale Alberoni e il suo Collegio. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio*. Arti Tep Grafiche, Piacenza, Italy, 2003, 207 pages.

Bernard, Jacques. *Louise de Marillac*. Éditions de Siloë, 2003.

Chierotti, Luigi, C.M. *Suor Rosalia Rendu (1786-1856). La mamma dei poveri.* II Edizione. Cooperazione Vincenziana, Genova, Italy, 2003, 103 pages.

___ *P. Alfonso Maria Ratisbonne (1814-1884). L'ebreo convertito da Maria.* III Edizione, Cooperazione Vincenziana, Genova, Italy, 2001, 44 pages.

___ *La schiavitù di S. Vincenzo de Paoli a Tunisi (1605-1607).* "Pro Manuscripto." Cooperazione Vincenziana, Genova, Italy, 2001. 45 pages.

Congrégation de la Mission. Province de Madagascar. *Session Vincentienne Sur les Funérailles.* Scolasticat Saint Vincent de Paul Tanantsoa (1-6 July 2003), 55 pages.

Dinnat, Claude. *Sœur Rosalie Rendu ou L'Amour à l'œuvre dans le Paris du XIXe siècle.* Preface by Fr. Joseph Choné, Promoter of the Cause of the Saints. L'Harmattan, 2001. 228 pages.

Elisabetta Anna Bayley Seton. *Il viaggio in Italia. Lettere e Diari.* Translation by Pietro Bindelli. Editasca, Leghorn, Italy, 2003. 94 pages.

Jachimczak, Józef, C.M. *Święty Wincenty a Paulo w posługiwaniu ubogim dzisiaj...* (*St. Vincent de Paul and the Service of the Poor Today*). This book gives a description of some of the principal branches of the Vincentian Family present in Poland). Wydawnictwo Instytut Teologiczny Księża Misjonarzy – Kraków (Published by: Theological Institute of the Priests of the Mission), Warsaw, Poland, 2001, 256 pages.

Marmilicz, André, C.M. *O Ambiente Educativo nos Seminarios Maiores do Brasil. Teoria e Prática.* Vicentina Gráfica Editora, Curitiba, Brazil, 2003, 388 pages.

Mezzadri, Luigi, C.M. *Vinzenz von Paul. Leidenschaft für die Armen (Vincent de Paul. The Passion for the Poor).* Translated from the French by M. H. Heinzen and A. Richartz), Verlagsgemeinschaft Topos plus, Mainz, Germany, 2003, 94 pages.

Nuovo, Luigi, C.M. – Castrica, Maddalena, D.C. *Dalla parte dei poveri. Suor Rosalia Rendu, Figlia della Carità (1786-1856).* CLV-Edizioni Vincenziane, Rome, Italy 2003, 82 pages.

Palú, Lauro, C.M. *Don Antônio Ferriera Viçoso, C.M.* Vicentina Gráfica Editora, Curitiba, Brazil, 2003, 23 pages.

Pérez Flores, Miguel, C.M. *El Superior local de la Congregación de la Misión*. (Posthumous work). CEME, Salamanca, Spain, 2003, 165 pages.

Province of Holland. *Lazaristen 100 jaar in Panningen. Hoe de Lazaristen "Onze paters" Werden*. DTP Graphic Products, Panningen, Netherlands, 128 pages.

Richartz, Alfonsa Magdalena, D.C. *Vinzenz von Paul. Stationen und Wege (Vincent de Paul. Stations and pathways)*. Johannes-Verlag Leutesdorf, Koblenz, Germany, 2002, 117 pages.

Rodríguez Bariáin José, C.M. *Experiencia del Pueblo de Dios en la Palabra del domingo*. Ediciones Pictorama, Murcia, Spain, 2002, 189 pages.

San Vincenzo de' Paoli. *Opere. 2. Corrispondenza 1640-1646 (luglio)*. C.L.V. – Edizioni Vincenziane, Rome, Italy, 2002, 561 pages.

Suor Giuseppina Nicoli, Figlia della Carità. *Scritti spirituali. Istruzioni alle seminariste. Quaderni XVIII-XX. Transcription of the texts and note by Erminio Antonello*. CLV – Edizioni Vincenziane, Rome, Italy, 2001, 317 pages.

Articles from Provincial Bulletins and Magazines

Anales de la Congregación de la Misión y de las Hijas de la Caridad – Spain
No. 4, July-August 2003: “La celebración de la Eucaristía en la creación de la comunidad nueva,” by L. Vela; “Los reglamentos de misiones de la C.M.,” by M. Olabuénaga; “Qué es la AIC”, by J. L. Cortázar. No. 3, May-June 2003: “Misiones populares y Congregación de la Misión,” by M. Olabuénaga. No. 2, March-April 2003: “Misiones en Filipinas,” by A. Herrera; “Sacudida en Nápoles, 1848-1862,” by L. Huerga; “Rasgos básicos de las misiones populares vicencianas,” by M. Olabuénaga. No. 1, January-February 2003: “La vocación-misión de los hermanos coadjutores: Su identidad vicenciana a inicios del siglo XXI,” by J. Ruíz; “Huc” (Régis-Évariste Huc), by L. Huerga; “Una fuente histórica desconocida: Los ‘Libros de Misiones’ (en España),” by M. Olabuénaga.

Animation Vincentienne. France, Cahier 85: “Rencontre avec les musulmans.”

Annali della Carità. Bimestrale dei Gruppi di Volontariato Vincenziano – AIC/Italy May-June 2003: “La Parola di Dio in San Vincenzo,” by A. Fanulli. March-April 2003: “La pace,” by G. Passerini; “La formazione: Elemento (ri) fondante dell’Associazione,” by G. Oteri.

Avance Vicentino. Boletín de noticias – Misioneros Vicentinos de Colombia
Year 46, No. 287, January-March 2003: “Misión en Papúa Nueva Guinea,” by H.

Marín. Year 45, No. 285, January-March 2002: “Itinerario de la Casa Provincial,” by J. Escobar; “Rasguñando nuestra historia,” by A. L. Galindo; “La teología de la vocación,” by Á. Panqueva.

Boletín Informativo – PP. Paúles, Provincia de Madrid No. 266, January-May 2003: “Cómo situarnos hoy en la pastoral juvenil y vocacional,” by D. J. Pla.

Boletín Provincial – PP. Paúles Venezuela No. 173, April-June 2003: “El Crimen del Padre Amaro: ¿Denuncia a la Iglesia, o llover sobre mojado?,” by P. R. Ramos; “Quien vive para servir sirve para vivir (Bases eclesiológicas del servicio de autoridad,” by A. G. L.

Bulletin des Lazaristes de France, No. 184 (October 2002): “Bibliographie vincentienne,” by B. Koch. No. 185 (January 2003): “Saint Vincent et le Rosaire,” by B. Koch.

Carità e Missione – Italia Year III, No. 1 – 2003: “Mons Antônio Ferriera Viçoso, C.M. (1787-1875),” by L. Palú; “La santità dei laici e Federico Ozanam,” by C. Guasco; “Il Beato Marcantonio Durando. Un testimone umile e appassionato del Vangelo,” by L. Nuovo; “Il beato Luigi Giuseppe François. Maestro e testimone,” by L. Nuovo; “Nuovi documenti su San Giovanni Gabriele Perboyre,” by L. Mezzadri; “José María Román Fuentes,” by L. Mezzadri. Year II, No. 2 – 2002: “L’immagine di San Vincenzo tra carisma e istituzione,” by L. Mezzadri; “Chiamati alla santità,” by R. D’Amico; “Il beato Marcantonio Durando e il suo tempo (1801-1880),” by G. Tuninetti.

China Sparks. Vincentian Reflections on the Church in China. June 2003: “Dancing in Tight Shoes. The Vincentian Vicariates in China (1840-1911),” by J. Loftus; “On Teaching at a Seminary in Mainland China,” an interview with Charles Pan, C.M.

CLAPVI. Conferencia Latinoamericana de Provincias Vicentinas. Year XXIX, No. 114 (May-August 2003): “III Encuentro de misioneros jóvenes” (collection); “Evangelizar ese pobre que soy yo,” by L. Vela; “La Doctrina Social de la Iglesia en América Latina,” by L. J. Rojas. Year XXIX, No. 113 (January-February 2003): “Evangelizar a los pobres,” by L. Vela; “A identidade da Família Vicentina,” by S. Valenga; “Cualidades del pastor vicentino,” by Á. Quevedo; “El pensamiento social de la Iglesia latinoamericana” (1st part), by L. J. Rojas; and “2003: Año del Rosario,” by E. Melchor.

Colloque – Journal of the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Mission (Ireland). Spring 2003, No. 47: “Vocations and Humanæ Vitæ,” by A. McGing; “Folleville Revisited: Reflections on Vincentian Apostolic Works,” by

K. Rafferty. *Winter 2002*, No. 46: “Marcantonio Durando CM (1801- 1880),” by T. Davitt.

Comunicare – Bolletino Provinciale, Rome, Italy September 2003, Year 2, No. 2: “Una ricorrenza storica: Ottanta anni fa i primi Vincenziani in Indonesia,” collection.

Cooperazione Vincenziana – Italy No. 104, October-December 2003: Suor Rosalia Rendu presto “Beata,” by L. Chierotti. No. 101, January-March 2003: “Ora il P. Durando è ‘Beato.’ Che cosa è cambiato?,” by L. Chierotti.

Echoes of the Company – Daughters of Charity Nos. 7-8, July-August 2003: “General Assembly.” No. 5, May 2003: “Five Faces of Rosalie Rendu,” by R. P. Maloney. No. 4, April 2003: “Community life: witness and support for the mission,” by J. Neo. No. 2-3, February-March 2003: “‘Mission’ according to Saint Vincent de Paul. Fundamental concepts,” by A. Orcajo; “What is at stake for the Daughter of Charity in mission,” by P. Lawlor; “Mission in situations of violence and extreme poverty,” by W. Kisu; “Vincertain mission in the local Church,” by F. Quintano; “Priests and Brothers of the Congregation of the Mission, Daughters of Charity and lay Vincentian people: an asset for the mission,” by B. Romo.

Evangelizar – Boletín provincial, Peru March-April 2003 – No. 2: “III Encuentro de Promotores Vocacionales – Miraflores, 05 de abril de 2003,” by P. Chuno.

Informazione Vincenziana – Italy October 2003: “9 novembre 2003: Beatificazione di Suor Rosalia Rendu (1786-1856),” by G. Guerra; “Il Processo di Beatificazione e il miracolo,” by R. D’Amico; “Sr Rosalia Rendu: la contemplazione che si fa servizio,” by R. D’Amico; “Jean-Léon Le Prevost (1803-1874) nell’anno del bicentenario della sua nascita,” by L. Galbiati. June-July 2003: “Il Beato Marcantonio Durando proclamato secondo Patrono della Diocesi di Ihosi” (Madagascar),” by A. Mombelli. April 2003: “Madagascar 20 anni dopo,” by V. Zerbinati. Dicembre 2002: “Sei beati, testimoni della missionarietà” (Chronicle of the beatification of M. Durando, of D. Okelo and J. Irwa, of A. G. Longhin, of Marie de la Passion, of L. Meneguzzi,” by the editors. October-November 2002: “Padre Durando: una passione missionaria,” by L. Galbiati.

Informatie Kleine Compagnie - Holland July 2003: “100 jaar Lazaristen in Panningen.”

Iprosul – Province of Curitiba January-March 2003: “São Vicente e a Bíblia,” by J. C. Fonsatti. July-September 2002: “Marcantônio Durando, CM, Bem-aventurado (1801-1880),” by P. Beltrando.

Les Cahiers Ozanam, No. 260 – 2/2003: “La charité: un sens obligatoire?,” by J. Cheville.

L'Osservatore Romano (Italian edition). 20.X.2002 (with regard to the beatification of Marcantonio Durando): “Santità e missione nell’Anno del Rosario.” *Supplement* of 20.X.2002: “Giovanni Paolo II proclama sei nuovi beati.” 4.XII.2002: “Padre Marcantonio Durando e la Chiesa di Torino.”

MEGVIS 2003. „Zu den Anfängen“ (47/2003): „Die Gründung der Kongregations der Mission ‚Vinzentiner‘ in Frankreich und Deutschland,“ by A. Richartz; „150 Jahre Osterreichische Lazaristen Provinz,“ by E. Shindler; „Zur Seligsprechung von Pater Marcantonio Durando CM,“ by A. Jernej.

Meteor. Kwartalnik Kleryków Zgromadzenia Misji (3-4/2002) (Bulletin of the CM Students published three times a year (Poland): “Błogosławiony Marcantonio Durando, kapłan i misjonarz św. Wincentego a Paulo” (Blessed Marcantonio Durando, missionary priest of St. Vincent de Paul), by Ł. Olszewski.

Oceania Vincentian. Congregation of the Mission, Australia–Fiji September 2002, Vol. 3: “Many Strokes of the Lash: André Duval,” by T. Williams; “Nurturing Conscience in the Vincentian Way,” by G. Cooney.

Speak ... On the Side of the Poor - Nigeria January-December 2002, Vol. I, No. 2: “Charity in our world today.”

Vincentian Chair of Social Justice – USA Vol. 6: *2000-2001 Presentations. Restoring Justice in the 21st Century*. The various articles are classified in four parts: “Vincentian Chair of Social Justice,” “Jubilee Debt Forgiveness,” “Catholic Social Thought in the University,” and “Living Justice: Pathways from Poverty and Commitment to the Common Good.” The “Vincentian Center for Church and Society and the Vincentian Chair of Social Justice” used the year 2000-2001 “to explore the central message of the Jubilee, described by Pope John Paul II as the time for “restoring social justice.”

Vincentian Heritage – USA Vol. 21, No. 2: “Elizabeth Ann Seton: Model of Contemplative Presence for the 21st Century,” by J. Flannelly; “Saint Louise de Marillac: Woman of Substance, Woman of God,” by G. Foley; “In the Face of Adversity”: The Response of the Vincentian and Charity Families to 9/11,” by R. Bechtle. Vol. 20, No. 2: “Pierre Coste and Catherine Labouré: The Conflict of

Historical Criticism and Popular Devotion,” by S. Poole; “Understanding Hearts – Elizabeth Seton and Louise de Marillac,” by B. A. McNeil.

Vinzentinische Nachrichten – Germany (Editor: J. A. Herget). Year 28, No. 88: “Christentum und Islam. Zwei Welten im Widerspruch.” Year 27, No. 87: “Marco Antonio Durando CM. Neuer Seliger der Lazaristen.”

General Bibliography

Ciccone, Lino. *Bioetica. Storia, principi, questioni*. Edizioni Ares, Milan, Italy, 2003, 404 pages.

López Honorio, Alfonso. *El Cielo es libre (¡y subversivo!)*. Catholic brochures Mission XXI. Ediciones Misión XXI, Mexico, 2003, 78 pages.

Motto, Andrés. *La Cuestión Social y la Enseñanza de la Iglesia. Un aporte a la esperanza*. Editorial GRAM, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2003, 253 pages.

Noè, Virgilio (Cardinal). *I Santi Fondatori nella Basilica Vaticana* (on the cover: profile of St. Vincent de Paul), Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, Modena, Italy, 1996, 515 pages.