

GENERAL CURIA

Rome, 11 September 2005

Feast of St. John Gabriel Perboyre

To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Brothers,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

With joy I write to share with you two things that cause great happiness in the Vincentian Family: MISEVI is spreading to different parts of the world and it will be holding its second International Assembly in December.

MISEVI started as a small seed, but quickly, the missionary impulse of the young people of the Vincentian Marian Youth of Spain rubbed off on some lay Vincentians throughout the world. As you well know, on 7 April 1999, the Holy See approved MISEVI as an International Public Association of the Faithful and in January 2001 it celebrated its first General Assembly at which the first International Coordinating Team was named.

During these past four years, the Coordinating Team has consolidated the structures of the Association, has procured economic funds for it and has helped in its worldwide expansion.

At present, Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Italy and Indonesia have approved National Statutes; those of Venezuela, Ireland and France are waiting approval; the United States and Brazil are drawing up theirs; and in various countries, such as Peru, El Salvador, Ecuador, Santo Domingo, Philippines, Cameroon, Slovakia, Ukraine and Germany, there are lay Vincentians who are most interested in establishing MISEVI.

I am sharing all this with you in order to give thanks to God, for, as you can see, the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul continues to be alive and to incite new ways to share itself, this time in this Association which seeks to stimulate, support, accompany and form the missionary vocation among the lay people of our Vincentian Family.

At the same time, we know that this is also a call to greater responsibility. We can and ought to continue to accompany them, as has been done until now, supporting them with our dedication so this new Association can emerge in our provinces.

The Association is preparing for its Second International Assembly. This will take place from 26-30 December 2005 in the Berceau, St. Vincent's birthplace. With the theme "Open our eyes to the world, our hearts to the mission," it hopes to evaluate its experience in these past four years and plan a program of action for the next four. I know how enthusiastic it is for this Assembly at which various countries will assist with the right to speak and vote and it hopes that some more will join with Statutes approved before 27 September 2005. Moreover, the Assembly is open to the participation of those countries which have started the process of establishing MISEVI and even to those who are thinking about doing so. In order to participate in the Assembly one simply has to write the International Coordinating Team, through www.misevi.org or at asamblea@misevi.org

As the event draws near and with the Vincentian Family's warm welcome of the Association, I ask with enthusiasm some commitments which we all can make:

1. Be attentive to lay missionary vocations and help them discern their evangelizing work among the poor; help them in whatever way you can, through material and spiritual means (support, orientation, advice, formation, economic funds, etc.).
2. In the Provinces where MISEVI is yet to be established, it would be good to appoint a confrere who could spend a bit of his time in a special way to collaborate closely with the lay missionaries and who could serve to accompany them in order to form the Association.
3. If there are already work experiences with lay missionaries in your countries, as well as outside of them, whatever they may be, communicate with me or directly with the International Coordinating Team (misevi@misevi.org); one of MISEVI's objectives is to be a channel where all lay missionaries in the Vincentian Family can converge, and for this reason it is important that communication be strengthened in order to "organize charity," as St. Vincent said.
4. Finally, if nothing has been organized yet in the area of lay participation in the work of evangelization with the poor, encourage and promote this vocation that is so important for our Vincentian spirit. You may include in your Provincial Projects the collaboration of lay people in

the “missions ad gentes” or you can offer to young people with whom you work some missionary experiences on a short or long-term basis. The Coordinating Team can give you more information on how this can be done.

At the threshold of the Second International Assembly of MISEVI, I dare ask for your close collaboration, according to your possibilities, in this endeavor. With all my heart I pray that Christ, the Evangelizer of the Poor, continue to bless the many lay people who dedicate part of or their entire life at the service of the mission, as well as those future members who are preparing to serve the poor throughout the world.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General