

Rome, 28 October 2007
Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

To all the members of the Congregation of the Mission

Mission Appeal

“Blessed are those who cooperate in extending the Church elsewhere.”

Letter of Saint Vincent de Paul to missionary
Jean Dehorgny (SV III, 36; English III, 41)

Dear Brothers in Saint Vincent,

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

Once again, I write this traditional October Mission Appeal Letter. Its purpose is precisely what is stated in the above-cited letter of Saint Vincent de Paul. Throughout the history of the Congregation, we have tried to respond to the needs of our Church, the petitions of our bishops. It is evident that what the Church needs are apostolic men, in other words, missionaries. Therefore, I appeal again to all the members of the Congregation of the Mission to continue to deepen yourselves in your missionary spirit, whether in your home provinces or abroad, serving faithfully by following Jesus Christ, evangelizing the Poor. The appeal of this letter goes out to all those confreres, who, after having read the needs that exist, feel the call from the depths of their hearts to respond to these petitions.

For this year’s Mission Appeal Letter, I would like to begin by naming the confreres who petitioned and were accepted to work in different missions since the Mission Appeal Letter of 2006. At the same time, I will also mention where needs continue to exist and new petitions that we have received. The division will be as follows: the international missions that are under the responsibility of the Superior General and his council, petitions that we have received from other provinces throughout the Congregation of the Mission, other missionary news.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

1. **Solomon Islands.** I will begin with the International Mission of the Solomon Islands, which is under the General Curia, but strongly supported by the Asia-Pacific Visitors’ Conference. Since

our last Mission Appeal, we have three new members in the Solomon Islands' community. They are Flaviano Caintic, from the Province of the Philippines; Emanuel Prasetyono, from the Province of Indonesia, and, to arrive shortly, Joeli Nabogi, from the Province of Australia, a native of the Fiji Islands. Two members of the mission will be finishing their time there by the end of 2007. They are Frank Vargas, who served as rector and superior, and Joseva Tuimavule. I want to take this opportunity to thank both of them for their most generous service. Their presence has certainly strengthened the apostolate and the growth of the Vincentian charism in the Solomon Islands.

We recently signed an agreement that spells out the responsibilities of the Asia-Pacific Visitor's Conference (APVC) for the mission in the Solomon Islands. The APVC has been very generous in assuring the personnel for this mission, which staffs a national seminary, runs a local parish and serves a formation center for laity. In the agreement, the APVC asks that the mission always be open to other members of the Congregation beyond the provinces that compose it. So, to be faithful to our agreement, I include a petition for this mission in this appeal letter.

In addition to the three specific apostolates of the Solomon Islands mission, for the last couple of years, I have included a petition to consider pastoral work in a neighboring diocese that is part of the seminary program. The bishop is a religious, Dominican, who requests the presence of the Congregation in his diocese as a way of supporting him and his diocesan clergy. This particular diocese has the vast majority of vocations in the seminary our confreres staff. The language for the entire mission is English and then that of the local people. I encourage all missionaries to learn the native language in order to enter more deeply into the culture and life of those you are called to serve.

- 2. Papua New Guinea.** The newest member of the mission in Papua New Guinea is Justin Eke from the Vice-Province of Nigeria, who joins our three other confreres. This mission, which began as a service to the national seminary as formators, has now been extended, as of last year, to include pastoral work in a nearby parish, which will also serve as a discernment house for candidates who are attracted to the Vincentian way of life. Because the contracts of some of our men there are coming to an end and they wish to move on to other services, either in their provinces or for the Congregation, I make this appeal to anyone who has some background in formation and would like to contribute to this seminary which is growing steadily through the service that the Congregation has provided over these past years.

In addition, we have received a petition from the former Bishop of Bereina, Bishop John Ribat, who is now the new Archbishop of Port Moresby. In a letter of 6 June, he invited the Congregation to have a fuller presence in the Diocese of Bereina. For some time now, our confreres in the seminary have spent special times, such as Easter and Christmas, doing parish work. The need is in an isolated, mountainous region of the diocese. At present, four parishes in the mountains are vacant. Obviously, they are in desperate need of priests. He is asking the Vincentians to take up a parish, preferably one called Woitape. If anyone feels inclined to this type of parish work, the languages are English and that of the local people. If you desire more information, the bishop has sent us some general information about the diocese. I ask you to contact the Curia and that information will be sent to you. Rolly Santos, a confrere who has spent some time in the parish of Woitape, wrote: "Those who come should be young and healthy to do the bush walks, which can take a whole day." I hope we can accept the bishop's offer to take on the parish. These people are truly among the more abandoned poor.

- 3. El Alto, Bolivia.** The newest member of our mission in El Alto is Cyrille de Nanteuil, from the Province of Paris. He joins our other three confreres in the very vast and varied mission territory. As you may know, the needs of El Alto are for formators, as well as missionary parish priests. The languages are Spanish and Aymara, that of the people. Presently we are in the process of reorganizing this mission. We have 100% support from the local bishop, who has been delighted with the presence of the Vincentians, since our beginnings in his diocese. He encourages us to increase that presence. It is truly mission territory: difficult and challenging. I know there are some of you who can take up that challenge.

PROVINCIAL MISSIONS

- 4. Province of Austria.** This is an invitation to confreres to deepen their understanding of Islam, while being present pastorally in our apostolic work in Istanbul. As many may know, the last missionary to volunteer for Istanbul was Claudio Santangelo, whom we have asked to take on the important task of Secretary General for the Congregation of the Mission for a period of time. So, I put out this urgent petition for other confreres to come to know the world of Islam and thus meet this very challenging reality in our world and Church today. In Istanbul, the need is for confreres who are willing to learn Turkish and to undertake additional interreligious studies. The languages of the

community at Saint Georg's, where the confreres would reside, are German and English.

5. **Vice-Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius.** As stated previously, CEVIM, the Conference of Visitors of Europe, has given significant financial support to this vice-province and some personnel from the Provinces of Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. But, again, this call goes out to the entire Congregation to serve in this area where the faith, after having been repressed for so many years, is being awakened in a lively manner. There is much enthusiasm among the confreres in the vice-province to expand their presence. But, to do so, they need the support and presence of good, healthy missionaries. Paul Roche, the Vice-Visitor writes: "We are struggling for personnel at a time when we need to send people for training and get at least one more house up and running. Maybe a bit of the glamour has worn off the idea of working in the former USSR — or perhaps people are afraid of the language," which is Russian.
6. **Province of Hungary.** Having just made the canonical visit of the province, I saw the good work that is being done. But I also noticed a great deficit of confreres. There are ten active confreres, two of whom are 95 years old. The work is with young people either in a high-school setting in one of the poorest areas of the country or in the university, which offers different opportunities: teaching a language and/or campus ministry. I spoke with the Cardinal and two bishops where our confreres work. They each pleaded for help. The language is Hungarian.
7. **Provinces of Italy-Albania.** Since my last Mission Appeal Letter, there are two new missionaries in Albania: Giovanni Colombi, from the Province of Turin, is preparing to work in the mission there. He served for many years as a missionary in Madagascar. Vittorio Pacitti from the Province of Rome, is now serving as Subdirector of the Daughters of Charity for the Region of Albania-Kosovo. The languages spoken are Albanian and Italian. The work is both parish ministry and accompaniment of our own candidates in formation. I would like to offer a special word of thanks here to Giuseppe Ferrara for his 14 years of generous service on this mission. He has now returned to the Province of Naples, after making a wonderful contribution in Albania.
8. **Province of China.** In the month of November, I will be visiting the province, where we hope to strengthen our evangelizing presence. China is the up-and-coming country of the world. Many Congregations have had long-term programs of formation and evangelization. The languages there are English, Taiwanese and Mandarin Chinese. It is certainly a difficult mission, but the Congregation has a long tradition of presence in China.

- 9. Province of Indonesia.** I received a petition indirectly from the Visitor, through a visit I received from Bishop Gilles Côté of the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga in Papua New Guinea, where four confreres from the province are presently working. Three are Indonesian and one is French, but a member of the Indonesian Province. During his visit, the bishop explained to me the various needs that exist in the diocese, that speak eloquently to our charism. I share them with you here.

There is a very special need for a senior priest to be a companion to the younger priests. The intention is to have a priest capable of accompanying the priests in the diocese. He would need to be a spiritual person, capable of listening, encouraging and asking the right questions; a person who can enkindle trust and keep confidentiality; one who is interested in the growth of these young men, both as persons and as priests. The confrere would be based in Kiunga, the diocesan seat. From there he would need to go out, from time to time, to where the priests live in remote parishes. A priest who has had missionary experience already would be ideal.

Another need is for a priest to accompany the candidates for the priesthood while they do their secondary studies. The intention is to construct a formation house in 2008 for about 12-15 serious candidates to the priesthood. The house will be a discernment house. Hopefully, by 2009, there will be a priest available to help accompany these young men at this level of formation. During the day, the priest could be involved in other works, assisting either in the parishes of Kiunga or some other diocesan services. A priest is needed who loves young people and is ready to spend time with them.

Thirdly, the bishop is also seeking priests to take over some of the parishes in the diocese.

For further information concerning the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga, you can write to the Curia. The bishop has left us some information. The languages are English and the native language of the people.

- 10. Province of Cuba.** Among other provinces, Cuba is one that always makes the October Mission Appeal Letter because of the very small number of confreres who work there, in spite of the great needs. As you know, the language there is Spanish.

We have been doubly blessed in Cuba recently. A newly ordained confrere, Nelson Rafael Paulino López, from the Province of Puerto Rico, who did his later years of formation in Cuba, has offered to continue serving there as a missionary. In addition, the Province of Puerto Rico has generously offered the services

of Marion Poncette, for at least one year, as Director of the Internal Seminary.

I take this opportunity to ask everyone to pray for Cuba's Visitor, Justo Moro. He is presently in Spain undergoing treatment for some serious health problems. We pray that he might have a good recovery so that he might return quickly to his beloved Cuba.

11. **Province of Barcelona.** Since last year, we have responded to its petition for missionaries for the work in San Pedro Sula in the Moskitia area of Honduras. Presently serving there is Włodzimierz Małota, from the Province of Poland. He is in the parish of Puerto Lempira. Another missionary, who is preparing to go to Honduras, is Miguel Ángel Rennes, from the Province of Madrid. We have received an offer from another young confrere from the Province of Poland to work there too. He should be free to arrive in 2008. The languages spoken are Spanish and Moskitia.
12. **Province of Salamanca.** It has made numerous petitions throughout the years to include its mission in Nacala, Mozambique in the October Mission Appeal Letter. I am happy to say that we have had two positive responses. One is Maurice Pilloud, from the Province of Toulouse. He is presently working on the mission. Sometime in the near future, Amine Weldegebriel, from the Province of Saint Justin De Jacobis, will arrive. The language of Mozambique is Portuguese. Because of the ever-expanding pastoral possibilities, there is continual need for confreres to reinforce the mission there. They also accompany a community of lay Vincentian missionaries.
13. **Vice-Province of Mozambique.** Since the last time I wrote, there are two new volunteers in Mozambique. They are: Eli Chaves dos Santos, from the Province of Rio de Janeiro, the former Visitor, and a member of the Executive Board of CLAPVI; and Sisay Sisto, from the Province of Ethiopia. The vice-province is small and continually in need of new missionaries. So I encourage others to join these enthusiastic missionaries in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. The language is Portuguese.

OTHER MISSIONARY NEWS

Members of the **Province of South India** work in the African country of Tanzania. The mission is growing ever stronger. Just this past year, the province has sent three new men: George Kannamkulath, Raju Karickal and George (Cino) Thonakara. Among the major works of the confreres are the formation of our own candidates and parish ministry.

I am happy to announce that the **Province of Slovakia**, at this present time, is engaged in establishing a new mission in the Diocese of Trujillo, Honduras. This diocese also includes the mission of the Moskitia and it is under the leadership of our confrere, Bishop Luis Solé. I want to congratulate the Province of Slovakia for this missionary effort. Already committed to the Vice-Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius, it now wants to expand to Latin America.

The other good news is that **COVIAM**, the Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar, has decided to accept a missionary invitation from the Bishop of Moundou in Chad. The undertaking is just at the initial stages. A member of COVIAM has visited there and made a report. The Conference is presently dialoguing with the General Curia regarding the mission itself. The Congregation of the Mission is not present in Chad at this time, although the Vincentian Family is and there is a community of Daughters of Charity from the Province of San Sebastián there. French is a necessity, as well as the language of the local people. When the mission gets off the ground, COVIAM asks that it be included in the Superior General's annual Mission Appeal Letter. Although COVIAM members have promised to supply personnel, they think it necessary to leave the volunteer process open to all members of the Congregation.

I pray that God will inspire many confreres to give of themselves in this special way.

Let us ask God to give the Company this spirit, this heart, this heart that makes us go everywhere, this heart of the Son of God, heart of Our Lord, heart of Our Lord, heart of Our Lord.... For this he sent the apostles; he sends us, like them, to bring fire everywhere, everywhere (SV XI, 291).

Your brother in Saint Vincent,



G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

SOME INFORMATION AND CRITERIA FOR THOSE WHO WRITE

1. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter or e-mail in time to arrive in Rome by 27 November 2007.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Confreres who volunteer should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will always dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.
5. Your letter should give some background about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests that you have, such as the mission in which you would like to take part.
6. Even if you have already written in the past, please contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are available at one moment might not be available at another, and vice-versa.
7. **If you are unable to give yourself as “gift,” consider a monetary contribution for the Vincentian Solidarity Fund.**

VINCENTIAN SOLIDARITY FUND

METHODS FOR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Provincial and Individual Contributions

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

John Gouldrick, C.M.
Treasurer General
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

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

In every case:

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