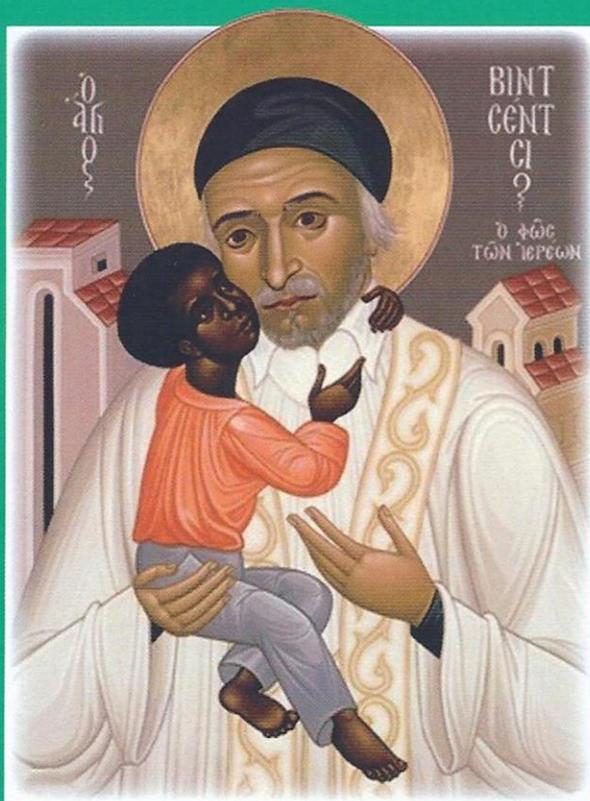


VINCENTIANA

52th Year - N. 1/2

January-April 2008



ST. VINCENT DE PAUL.

Vincentian Solidarity

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
GENERAL CURIA

GENERAL CURIA

WINNERS OF THE SYSTEMIC CHANGE AWARD FOR 2008

Rome, 25 January 2008

*Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
Anniversary of the foundation of the C.M.*

To All the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

My dear Brothers,

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

I write to you to announce the winners for the Systemic Change Award for 2008. In our December *tempo forte* meeting, the Council and I reviewed nine applications that were forwarded to the Curia from provinces throughout the world. After careful study of each of the projects, we selected four winners, following the criteria that were included in a letter sent to all the Visitors 27 September 2007.

As you recall, the award was established to acknowledge and support projects developed by an individual confrere or groups of confreres which reflect St. Vincent's creativity in finding and implementing unique and even untried ways to respond to the urgent needs of the poor. We used the criteria that were set forth, that is that the project involves the poor themselves, the vision is holistic, that the programs are self-sustaining as they try to address the root causes of poverty, and that the project itself fosters transparency by involving the people themselves in budgeting and financial reporting. We also looked to see if the projects worked to construct a shared vision among a diverse range of peoples.

Following are the winners of the January 25 2008 Systemic Change Award.

I. From the Province of Barcelona, San Pedro Sulla, Honduras, Central America, **Friends Forever Showing the Way**, accompanies children and their families who live in high risk areas.

This program, Amigos Para Siempre, was begun in 1993 as a preventive measure developing socioeducational actions directed particularly towards families and children. In the area there is a high incidence of selling and consuming drugs, youth gangs, sexual exploitation of children and young people, lack of decent work, which often forces families into selling of drugs, and prostitution. The program is dedicated to work with the children and families making them principal agents of change. The program proposes to prevent, to avoid and to create alternatives so that children do not fall into situations where they become street children, members of gangs and adolescents involved in prostitution.

Treatment and intervention that are important in the prevention is urgent and indispensable so the project provides different forms of support: psychological, value formation, education, tutoring, nutritional and health care services. The older youth and their mothers are given technical preparation. The program works in conjunction with other neighborhood organizations creating activities together for the good of the community. At the state level, an organization coordinates the various entities that work with the problems that children face. The project maintains a close relationship with this government entity in order to help bring about solutions for the very difficult situations in which the children live.

II. The next project comes from the Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the **DePaul Kharkiv Street Children's Project**. What the confreres hope to accomplish is to make a real Vincentian contribution to the city of Kharkiv in the post-Soviet time when massive social problems are being left unattended to. The project focuses on the most vulnerable of these groups, the street children.

At the beginning, the involvement of the children in the planning stages of the project was minimal. The project was carried out by many members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family in the city of Kharkiv; that is, the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, the AIC, the DePaul Foundation and to a lesser degree the Vincent de Paul Society. Once the program began just over a year ago, very quickly the children were listened to and their suggestions as to meeting places in the city and services at the Day Center were acted upon. The program evolved to adapt to the reality that these children experience.

Clearly, this program is dealing with a wide range of human needs. The children have either run away from home or have been driven out of their homes, and are living in the streets. Theirs is a world of crime, glue-sniffing, alcohol, narcotics and prostitution. The project attempts to attend to the children individually, giving them a

sense of self-worth and respect. Their medical and physical needs are addressed. But also, as trust develops, care is given to the emotional, social and educational needs. During the summer months, several of the children were helped to find temporary jobs.

The root causes behind the situation of the more than 130 children that the program has cared for, could be the prevalence of alcohol abuse, domestic violence, marriage break-up and the collapse of the social care which was offered under the Soviet Union. The project has an international dimension to it, and so they are required to comply with legal requirements, not only of the Ukraine, but Great Britain as well, which also provides for a greater transparency in regard to reporting. The project is very much a partnership and each element within the partnership has gradually been forced to abandon preconceived ideas and to come to a shared vision. Directly involved on a daily basis are the confreres, the Daughters of Charity, the AIC, the DePaul Foundation and the Orioni Sisters. Just two years ago the city denied that there was any problem in Kharkiv. Now the project cooperates with city authorities who have asked for the assistance of the members of the project. The media has been used for fund-raising and to help to raise the consciousness of the public. Presentations are given in schools by social workers, legal teams and local authorities.

The project is developed in three stages. Stage one is outreach in order to establish contact with the children. A mini-bus specially fitted so that up to ten children can sit inside and share a hot meal, goes to four locations in the city each night. Stage two is the Day Center. As children become more trusting they are invited to come to the Day Center based in St. Vincent's Parish. As many as seventy come there each day. The third stage is sleeping accommodations. For the time being, the parish provides only emergency accommodations because of legal restrictions.

III. The third project, entitled **They are Brothers and Sisters**, is a project for accepting and uplifting HIV and AIDS patients in the Province of Southern India. The project provides personal social help to enhance the holistic care of persons with AIDS. This is done through education, medical assistance, humanitarian help and raising awareness in eight villages through the mass media. The AIDS patients find themselves among the poorest of the society. They are rejected, disregarded, and degraded by many, including their own family members. They are misunderstood and stigmatized by the society and often judged harshly. Often they are denied basic necessities, like medical treatment and even in some cases, last rites

before death. Through awareness programs many have participated in the development of the program.

The project aims at a holistic change in the lives of the patients by responding to their needs, helping to bring them into the mainstream of society through awareness and health care programs. The project addresses personal, social and spiritual issues including educational and self-employment programs. Because of their rejection, many AIDS patients are denied jobs which leaves people in utter poverty, confusion and depression. The project sets up certain self-help programs such as tailoring, hand crafts, needlework and light physical work. Some of the projects were suggested by the patients and they have taken an interest in training others in these fields. To achieve financial transparency there are financial resource meetings, a financial committee, local auditors and a timely and regular control of accounts as well as a budget preparatory committee and the public presentation of the accounts. Many young men and women volunteers from the local colleges and other educational institutions help to carry out the plans and projects. Of particular support has been the care and acceptance that the patients have received from members of the Catholic Church, which has paved the way for involving many others to contribute to the projects for the patients. There is hope that the project will continue to play a vital role to bring about a transformation in society for a better tomorrow where all are considered brothers and sisters.

IV. The fourth and final project, DePaul WoodWorking Project, comes from the USA Midwest Province mission in Kenya. The overall purpose of the program is to prepare young people with skills and knowledge of a trade so that they can find employment. After completing a two-year training course in carpentry, students can receive a Grade Three Certificate in carpentry which qualifies them for job opportunities to make a living allowing them to provide for their families. This project was started in July 2003 for young men who lived in the slums of Nairobi where unemployment is over 50% and they try to raise their families on a mere \$4 a day. The DePaul WoodWorking Program now includes women as students, since many of the poor are single mothers searching for a way to provide for their families. The products made in the workshop are supplied to organizations in need and some of the furniture is sold to help the classes that follow to buy tools and equipment.

The project itself has two phases: training and production. Through the generosity of some donors a small shop was purchased and the production side of the workshop began. At the end of the second year in the program the participants take the national trade

test in carpentry administered by the government. All the students who have taken the test have passed. The Certificate is recognized as entry level into a trade. Two of the graduates from the program have started their own furniture-making business. They make products that DePaul WoodWorking sells, thus providing salaries for them and a small profit for the workshop. One Kenyan carpenter who had been trained in the program is in charge of the production work and another is in charge of the training. These graduate students give back to the program, and others give financial assistance or donate tools. So a network has been established among those who have participated in the program. The budgets for the program are prepared and reviewed by the house treasurer and the provincial treasurer and then submitted to the financial committee for review, thereby fostering transparency in the program.

These are summaries of the four winners of the Systemic Change Award for 2008. I am happy to share with you the presentation of these Systemic Change Awards on the very day on which we remember the birth of our Congregation. This effort of Systemic Change is without doubt an expression of our faithfulness to the holistic project of evangelization that Saint Vincent conceived from his first sermon of the mission. May the Lord bless our efforts in the service of evangelization, like He blessed that sermon, answering the prayers and the good will of Madame de Gondi.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

LENT 2008

Rome, 6 February 2008

Ash Wednesday

To the Congregation of the Mission

My brothers,

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

Lent 2008 has come upon me quickly. So much so that I fear that many of you in far distant communities will not receive this communication at the beginning of the Lenten season.

What I would like to share with you this year comes from a dialog I had via the internet with a confrere who had a legitimate concern about the quality of the communal prayer in his local community. In the back and forth comments, we each reflected on what we considered significant with regard to our communal prayer life. At one point, because I liked the quality of his reflections, I asked if he would put together some thoughts that I might incorporate into my Lenten letter for 2008. He agreed to that and so I present to you here a combination of our reflections concerning common prayer.

As we prepare to celebrate the gift of Lent, the Word of God calls us to unite ourselves more deeply to the unselfish and obedient suffering and death of Jesus by a conversion of mind and heart and spirit. Just under two weeks ago all of us were reflecting on the meaning of conversion as we celebrated the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. Paul's conversion itself had a great impact on the conversion of St. Vincent de Paul. This year for the foundational feast I was in Cameroon. There is always something wonderful about the Word of God; no matter how many times we might hear a particular text, it is so dynamic that something new can touch our hearts and deepen our reflection.

This year it struck me that the whole concept of conversion, using Paul's as an example, is intimately bound up with mission. The first Saturday following Ash Wednesday we hear the call or conversion of the tax collector, Levi, known to be a notorious unjust sinner and called so by the Pharisees. But it is such as he that the Lord Jesus has come to call. Levi became a disciple of Jesus responding to the invitation to "Follow me." I would hope that this Lenten season, as we are called both to personal and communal conversion, all of us

might intimately link that with the desire to be more faithful in following Jesus Christ in the mission that he has given us: to evangelize and serve the poor.

As always, God invites us to holiness in community. We need to be careful, as we share the message of Lent with those we serve, that we always encourage Lent's effectiveness in ourselves. I would like to strongly recommend to you, my brothers, that this Lent we share a common effort to improve our prayer in common. A number of years ago, Father Maloney called us to make our prayer more beautiful for God and attractive to the young. He meant that invitation to reshape all of our prayer every day, not just as an occasional experience. I am repeating that call to you, a call to improve the daily prayer of your community.

And I would like to add another note: that we pray together so that our community life might be the better. St. Vincent asked us to live together as dear brothers. In the past fidelity was often measured by observance of a universally legislated rule with an order of day that was much the same throughout the world. Today, fidelity can be measured by a member's observance of the covenant that he or she has made with the other members of the house. The covenant, of course, embraces not only our common commitment to an apostolic mission, but also our pledge to support one another in life together and in prayer.¹ I ask you to deepen your commitment to and cooperation with the members of your house to pray together in a true spirit of community as St. Vincent hoped for it. It was Vincent who said:

"Give me a man of prayer and he will be capable of everything. He may say with the apostle, 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me.' The Congregation will last as long as it faithfully carries out the practice of prayer, which is like an impregnable rampart shielding the missionaries from all manner of attack" (SV XI, 83 Coste).

All would agree that saying prayers does not necessarily guarantee that we are praying. We need to pray together in a way that allows us to discover and share our inner selves, our faith and our doubts, our fears and our confidence, our stories of effectiveness and our failures, our commitment to be truly Vincentian. Prayer should help us to know and appreciate one another as individuals within community, to support one another gently and faithfully, to foster tolerance and

¹ For a more developed reflection, cf. ROBERT P. MALONEY, "As Friends Who Love One Another Deeply," in *Vincentiana* 44 (2000/4-5), pp. 335-354.

openness to the different gifts given by the Spirit to each of us. It may very well be that the recitation of Office, as important as that is, does not always support the goals of our communal prayers as brothers. Sometimes the recitation of the Office can be mechanical, lifeless, sometimes it is too fast or not in true unison, conditions we must remedy with unselfish dedication. The traditional way of saying Office does not always offer us space for interpersonal and fraternal sharing.

I encourage you to talk together as dear brothers in your house and to find ways to pray together meaningfully and fraternally as our Constitutions ask of us (C 46). Many of us have collected prayer forms from Community meetings, from books, from parishes and other situations. They can be simple prayers, with periods of silence and time to share our hearts with one another. Prayer can even be spontaneous when we are with our brothers. Another helpful form of communal prayer is *Lectio Divina*, a very common form of prayer used throughout the Congregation.

Once or more a week take the day's Scripture readings, or the readings of Sunday, and share what the selections mean to us personally and how we would preach on them. Some might find recorded music helpful to support their singing, or as a background to their quiet prayer. The confreres of a house should openly and honestly discuss the time and place of their prayer to find the situation most conducive to good prayer.

Let each confrere participate in the house's daily prayer, using whatever creativity and experience he has, each being humble enough to accept the choices made and enter into the prayer with a full heart. Confreres who work with youth or who are young themselves can offer helpful insights into making our prayer attractive to youth. We need to find a working balance between patterns that make a familiar and comfortable space for our prayer and helpful variety that keeps us growing.

Besides Morning and Evening Prayer, there are other opportunities to make our common life more prayerful. For example, a house could add to their weekly schedule or on an occasion, prayers to our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, the Rosary, a house Penance Service, a brother's reception of the Anointing of the Sick, added prayer time on feast days, grace at table — all allow us to deepen our sharing of prayer and to fulfill our desire to live prayerfully within the living circle of our brothers.

Prayer forms can become less prayerful because of too much sameness. For example, if grace before meals is always the same, we might cease praying and just appear to be reciting words.

There is another dimension of our prayer that involves the priests, but all of the faithful should take time to examine their participation in the celebrations of the Eucharist. St. Vincent was a major force in the improvement of the Liturgy in his time. (See Coste I, XIII to get a view of the background of the Liturgy in Vincent's time and his commitment to improving Liturgy among the clergy). The retreats for ordinands, the Tuesday conferences, the work with the ordained and the seminaries all included as part of their goals the improvement of the liturgical knowledge and practice of each individual celebrant. Like Vincent, we live in a time when the Church is experiencing the changes that follow new emphases of an ecumenical council. Some embrace these changes, and some resist them. We should follow our Founder's example of commitment to the teaching of the Church to be men who, in our own practice, lead by example in ourselves and in our work.

I know I ask a lot, but what is more important to any of us than the Eucharist, the "source and summit" of our Christian life? (C 45 § 1). So I ask you to review the rubrics and examine yourselves to see if you have allowed some personal choices, or convenience, or an attitude that "it does not matter" to taint your celebration with inappropriate elements. There used to be a custom among us to reread the rubrics of the Eucharist as part of our annual retreat. That would be a good practice for us now, perhaps even as a house.

There are often diocesan liturgical officials or members of educational institutions available to speak to our members and help us make practical improvements. And in today's world, having yourself videotaped when celebrating in your usual way might be enlightening. The bravest confreres might even show the video to their brothers and ask for comments. We need to practice Vincent's own humility and learn what we need to change so that we may celebrate according to the mind of the Church.

Concerned as we are to animate the Vincentian Family, we should take special care to observe those rubrics that display the role of the baptized in the liturgy. We are aware of their service as Readers and Eucharistic Ministers for example, but we need to be sensitive to the subtler elements of their participation; for example, when we invite them to pray aloud, e.g. Creed or Our Father, we should not turn pages or search for whatever we need next. The responses to the dialog before the Preface and the Great Amen should be said or sung only by the people and not by the clergy, according to the rubrics. Respecting the Assembly's role echoes St. Vincent's dedication to encouraging all the members of the Body of Christ to share the Ministry of Prayer and Service.

We must find a balance between extreme rigidity in our celebration of the Eucharist and self-created individual oddities. There is flexibility in the Liturgy, as a good reading of the documents and of commentators will show, always shaped by our desire to celebrate a Liturgy that draws the assembly into the same Christ-like selfless worship, led by our own unselfishness and humility.

The celebration of the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday is a prime example of the relationship between common prayer (the Eucharist being the example *par excellence* of common prayer) and mission wherein Jesus intimately links charitable service with the sharing of Word and Sacrament.

My brothers, what a blessing for the Church if each of us rededicated ourselves in unselfish humility to join voices with our brothers and sisters in prayer. To paraphrase St. Vincent de Paul, "Give me a community of prayer...."

On a practical note, by way of conclusion, during moments of your common prayer, I ask you to lift up your hearts and minds and voices to the Lord who hears the cry of the poor and pray particularly for our brothers and sisters in troubled places such as Kenya, Eritrea, the Middle East, Northern India and Colombia which presently are countries where our brothers and sisters of the Vincentian Family and the poor that they serve are suffering the most.

"... if we come together before the Lord as the first Christians used to do, he will give himself in turn to us, and remain in us with his lights, and will himself accomplish in and through us the good we are bound to do in his Church" (Letter of St. Vincent, Jan 15, 1650).

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

ONGOING FORMATION

Rome, 18 February 2008
Feast of St. Francis Regis Clet

To All the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

My dear Brothers in St. Vincent de Paul,

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

I would like to ask a question: What might the poor expect from us?

Might they expect us to be routine, uninteresting, unstimulating men, content with what we know and how we serve? Or might the poor expect more from the followers of St. Vincent de Paul?

You know my answer. I framed the questions so you would know where I want to go. None of us would deny, I am sure, that the poor might expect more of Vincentians. They have heard of our founder. They were moved by his vision. They have heard how he found creative ways to give them hope. He made God's love present to them.

My brothers, it is part of our Vincentian vocation that we too be creative and fresh in our service of the poor. We can do no less. The key to ongoing renewal of ourselves and of our ministry is ongoing formation.

Faithful to the will of the Visitors, and with the unanimous support of my Council, I write each and every one of you to reflect deeply upon the importance of ongoing formation in your personal life as well as in the life of the local community, your province, and the Congregation as a whole.

In Mexico, our discussion on the importance of Vincentian formation led us to state clearly that **we are our best resources**; there are none better. Therefore we are morally obliged to do all in our power to assure that each and every confrere of the Congregation of the Mission is given the opportunity to prepare himself on an ongoing basis in order to be faithful to our mission of following Jesus Christ, evangelizing the poor. As Article 2 of our Constitutions states: *"With this purpose in view, the Congregation of the Mission, faithful to the gospel, and always attentive to the signs of the times and the most urgent calls of the Church, should take care to open up new ways and use new means adapted to circumstances of time and place. Moreover,*

it should strive to evaluate and plan its works and ministries and in this way remain in a continual state of renewal."

My brothers, the Constitutions say it clearly. We are called to remain in a continual state of renewal, individually and communally in order to respond faithfully to the gospel, to the signs of the times and the calls of the Church. Moreover, our lords and masters deserve the very best from us.

It would do us well to be faithful lest we hear words similar to those that were written to the Church of Laodicea: *"I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth"* (Rev. 3:15-16). Our Constitutions are a matter of rights and obligations. If we live them faithfully and allow ourselves to be formed and reformed by them, we will be able to live our Vincentian charism with vitality and joy.

In the synthesis of the international Visitors meeting, a number of basic aspects of Vincentian formation were reflected on. I would like to highlight these aspects.

1. Fundamental perspective for ongoing Vincentian formation: Cultivate our missionary vocation

The following of Christ, evangelizer of the poor, constitutes the principal axis of all Vincentian formation. Our identity as missionaries is not given once and for all; rather it is the result of our daily relationship with Christ, with the community to which we belong, with the world, and with the poor. We are convinced that formation is not an acquired state, but rather a way: initial formation is an introduction to this way which lasts a lifetime.

2. The objectives to be reached in ongoing formation

The first objective of ongoing formation is the holiness corresponding to the life of the missionary (CR 1, n° 3; C 1). Joined to this fundamental objective is continual growth on the human and professional level, which leads the missionary to acquire an even deeper capacity for relating with others and competence in the proclamation of the Word and in the practice of charity. As stated previously, the Vincentian missionary is therefore called to be always attuned to the times and to allow himself to be intimately touched by what goes on around him, knowing how to discern in daily events the mission to which God calls him. This leads him, in fidelity to the gospel, to adapt his own ministry to the real demands of the people, learning to be flexible and creative in his apostolate.

3. The operational levels of ongoing formation

- At the personal level, the missionary takes responsibility for his ongoing formation; it cannot be delegated to or substituted by another person or strategy. In the different ages of our life (youth, adult, senior, and old age) and in whatever ministry we exercise, all the missionaries have to cultivate the constant discipline of ongoing formation.
- At the local level, the community constitutes the primary context of formation in which each confrere is constantly challenged to grow.
- At the provincial level, the Visitor is called to create, where it does not exist, the Commission for Ongoing Formation and to empower it in order to assist in developing in all confreres the personal motivation of the importance of ongoing formation (cf. S 41-42).
- At the level of Conferences of Visitors and Provinces, formative meetings, interchanges and evaluations are indispensable today.
- At the level of the Congregation, there is a need to develop some lines of specifically Vincentian ongoing formation (Ratio Formationis, a Practical Guide for ongoing formation, or Lines of Action).

4. Obstacles encountered in ongoing formation

In the journey of formation, the missionary encounters throughout his life many obstacles, beginning with those which manifest themselves on the level of the person, such as the weakening of the spiritual dimension, intellectual laziness, disinterest for reading and study, the abuse of modern means of communication (internet), apostolic pragmatism which does not allow space for a constant and attentive reflection on the signs of the times, and individualism in the ministries which indulges the desire for personal fulfillment.

On the community level, the obstacles assume the form of a shift to bourgeois values and lifestyle, the lack of formation projects and concrete operative plans, difficulty in relating to one another in a mature way, and a distance from the poor which makes the knowledge of their reality proportionately difficult.

Finally, at the cultural level, the principal obstacles to ongoing formation include aspects of consumerism, fundamentalism, relativism, weakening of the truth, etc. All this is in contrast to living, seeking and witnessing to the truth with simplicity and humility which constitute the first steps in the following of Christ.

5. The values of ongoing formation

Ongoing formation, as it returns to the sources that nourish it, revising and updating the tools received in initial formation, keeps the Vincentian charism alive, deepens it, perfects it and reinterprets it in the face of new challenges.

Ongoing formation is a significant part of helping us to perfect ourselves in the art of loving the poor. At the same time, ongoing formation provides us the tools necessary to share God's love in authentic ways with all.

I want to encourage each of you individually and communally to follow up on what is written here, specifically on the objectives that have been put forth. I recognize that in many provinces, there already exists the recognition of the importance of ongoing formation for all ages of confreres. I have been quite impressed with a number of the programs that have been created in order that the confreres might be adequately prepared for the mission that has been entrusted them. At the same time, the consequences of a lack of ongoing formation are atrocious. And those who suffer most are the poor whom we are called to serve.

Ongoing formation, when well done, can only work towards the improvement of the quality of our mission. With regard to the theme of ongoing formation, *Vincentiana* issue 2007, # 3, has been dedicated to the contents of the meeting in Mexico. There you will find the presentations that provided a foundation for the reflections of the Visitors as well as the process that marked the path for their reflection and the results of this journey as seen in the summaries that were presented by those who synthesized the thoughts of the groups.

I ask all of you to reflect seriously on what our Constitutions and Statutes tell us about ongoing formation. Accept what you reflect as a challenge to further creative fidelity. Besides C 2 already stated, I ask you to reflect and pray over C 25 § 2; S 42; C 77 §§ 1 and 2; C 78, §§ 1, 2, and 4; and C 81.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR
(3-7 March 2008)

Rome, 27 March 2008

To the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Brothers,

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

The following is a summary of some of the points that we discussed in our most recent *tempo forte* meeting 3-7 March 2008.

1. We received an up-dated report from the **Commission for the Revision of the Statutes** who met in the General Curia from 25-26 February. Previously the Commission reviewed and organized all the suggestions that emerged at the Visitors' meeting in Mexico, June 2007. The material they have produced will be part of the material to be studied in the Domestic Assemblies in preparation for the General Assembly 2010. I want to thank publicly the members of this Commission, Fathers Alberto Vernaschi, Paul Golden, Juan Julián Díaz Catalán, and Giuseppe Turati, for the fine work that they have done up to this point.
2. We chose a place where we will hold the **General Assembly in 2010**. That information will be forthcoming. We decided on the theme for the General Assembly. That also will be forthcoming. We also drew up a list of things for the Preparatory Commission to do for the General Assembly. The coordinator of that Commission is Father Giuseppe Turati from the Province of Turin. Other members of the Commission are Father Elie Delplace from the Province of Paris, Father Zeracristos Yosief, from the Province of Saint Justin de Jacobis, Father Bienvenido Disu from the Province of the Philippines, Father Pat Griffin from the Province of Philadelphia and Father Fernando Macías from the Province of Chile. They will meet for the first time in June 2008.
3. We received an update from the Secretary General regarding the **catalog** for this year. We hope to begin distribution by the end of this month.

4. The Econome General gave a **financial report** for the year 2007.
5. Brother Peter Campbell gave us an update on the **Vincentian Solidarity Office** (www.famvin.org/vso). Since the last *tempo forte* meeting, they have received four new VSO projects and two micro-project grants. Brother Peter also shared with us the transition process for the VSO Director. As mentioned previously, Father Miles Heinen will begin his term as the Vincentian Solidarity Office Director in Philadelphia on 1 January 2009.

Another major decision that was made regarding the Vincentian Solidarity Office was to merge it with the International Development Office. In this *tempo forte* meeting we accepted the resignation of Father Carl Pieber who has been the Director of the International Development Office. Father Carl had been named the new Director of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal in Philadelphia following the death of its former Director, Father Jim Kiernan. The work that he experienced was quite overwhelming. So as not to increase the burden, we looked for an alternative way of operating and decided to merge of the two Offices. It will be the responsibility of Brother Peter Campbell and Mr. Scott Fina to work out the details of that merger, reporting back to the Superior General and his Council at a further date with their recommendations. I take this opportunity to thank Father Carl Pieber for his generosity in serving as the International Development Director since January 2007.

6. Report from the **Delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family**. Father Ginete reported on his visit of the Vincentian Family in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti in December 2007. He states that what is striking is the dedication and commitment that is so evident in our Family members towards the welfare of the poor, the desire to work together, and the conviction that formation in our spirituality is of the utmost importance. He also highlighted the dedication of the confreres and the Daughters of Charity in guiding lay people of our Family, helping to instill in them the true sense of Vincent's spirit.

He reported on the annual meeting of the Vincentian Family International Heads that was held in Rome 31 January - 2 February. It included the most number of participants to date because aside from the usual eight groups that come, three new groups were invited: the Sisters of Charity of St. Joan Antide-Thouret, the Sisters of Charity Federation of Strasbourg and the Sisters of Charity of the North American Federation. Also

joining in this year's gathering was Father Robert Maloney who gave a report on the Commission for Promoting Systemic Change. The theme for this year's celebration of the feast of St. Vincent de Paul will continue in the line of reflection on our spirituality in light of systemic change. Regarding the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Vincent and St. Louise, it was decided that a group be formed on the international level. The Superior General will coordinate the formation of this group.

Father Ginete reported to us on the meeting of the AIC Executive Board in Milan in February. One of the highlights of that meeting was, "convinced of the option to promote systemic change, the AIC leadership decided to conduct a meeting within the framework of systemic change". The AIC demonstrated that it is not simply paying lip service to the current theme being adopted by the International Vincentian Family, but that it is wholeheartedly pouring its whole organization, leaders and members, into this program.

During the next months, Father Ginete will be at the Vincentian Family Gathering in New Orleans in April. He will then travel through Asia: Thailand, Taiwan and the Philippines. In July he will be present with the Superior General at the Vincentian Youth Gathering in Bathurst, Australia as well as the World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia.

Father Ginete also included in his report an outline for the continental formation sessions for Vincentian Family Advisors, Directors, and leaders on systemic change. More information on these regional meetings is forthcoming.

7. The Executive Secretary of **SIEV**, Julio Suescun, gave us a report on the colloquium of Young Vincentian Investigators that took place 3-16 February in Paris. More information concerning this colloquium can be found at www.cmglobal.org. The colloquium was directed by the Director of SIEV, Father Alexander Jernej, with the support of the CIF staff. There were nine participants, which they considered poor considering that there are many more confreres doing serious investigations in Vincentian topics. Nonetheless the organizers considered the workshop itself a great success. The recommendation of the Superior General and the Council was that these colloquia be held with greater frequency, perhaps every two or three years and that the content of the colloquium be published either in an article or in *Vincentiana*.
8. We had an report from Father Maloney updating us on the **Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change**. Their

meeting was held in San Francisco in February. Some of the highlights of the meeting were the following:

- The book, *Seeds of Hope, Stories of Systemic Change*, is moving forward and on target. Hopefully it will be out by September 27.
- They decided to make the tool kit a work in progress that changes continually with use. It will be distributed for the first time to all the participants at the continental workshop which will take place in Mexico next year.
- They also spoke about start-up grants. An official letter regarding this matter was sent out to all Visitors on March 1. They also discussed the comic book version of systemic change.
- The Commission completed a ten-week series of articles on the Vincentian Family English web site. Their report spoke about the **continental workshops** for preparing leaders and moderators of the Vincentian Family for promoting systemic change. Those workshops will be held in 2009 in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and in 2010 in Europe, the United States, and most likely Brazil. The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Madrid at the International Secretariat of the JMV who, at the same time, will receive a workshop on systemic change.

9. We received a report from Father Joseph Foley the **Vincentian NGO at the United Nations**. One of the Commissions on which Father Foley participates is Social Development whose theme this year is "Creating Decent Work for All." Father Foley also spoke about his collaboration with the Brothers of Charity whom he considers to be a gift to us. Father Foley will be standing in for the Brothers in the UN in New York promoting the theme of "Human Rights at 60" where the Brothers want to speak about Mental Health as a human right. The Brothers offered to represent the CM at meetings in Geneva and/or Paris. It is good to see the collaboration of the Vincentian Family at this high level of discussion.

I would like to single out one of the highlights from the second part of his report. Father alerted us to the fact that there are 2.5 million Iraqi refugees living outside their country, many of them Catholic, forced to leave Iraq by the government that is presently being installed. The refugees face major sufferings such as the lack of water, food, and health care. Education is basically non-existent. The sad fact is that the United States spent more money in Iraq in four years than it spent in Africa in a century.

We thank Father Foley for his report. I certainly admit that we in the Council were energized by the presentation, helping us to be more conscious of the situation of the poor throughout the world and how their situation is being dealt with at this high-powered level. Check out his web page: www.cm-ngo.net.

10. We received a report from John Freund the **web master** for the Congregation of the Mission. The first matter to be highlighted is that St. John's University awarded its International Medal in recognition of the role of *famvin* in promoting international good will to John Freund during its annual Founders Week Convocation. Congratulations, John.

One of the other facets of the revamping of the English web page is providing a weekly featured video. We discussed the other sites in Spanish, Italian and French and how they have less access to some of the newer technology, such as YouTube. Expanding this material and technology to the other sites demands translators and that is where our difficulty arises, as we all know. Besides checking out the *famvin* web sites in the four languages in which they are produced, I encourage you to check out our own Congregation's web page www.cmglobal.org.

11. We reviewed some material that arrived from activities of the **Conferences of Visitors**. One was an evaluation of the Congregation of the Mission Forming the Formators Institute that was presented by Father Sy Peterka who is a member of the Eastern Province of the United States, assisting COVIAM, particularly in the area of initial and ongoing formation.
12. We also had a report with the presence of the three Visitors from the western part of the United States as they continue to move ahead in their **project of reconfiguration** with the goal of January 2010. Their report included mini-reports from the New Community Task Force, the Finances and Temporal Goods Task Force, the Leadership Task Force, the Provisional Policies Task Force and the Provisional Norms Task Force. To begin the meeting with the three Visitors, we prayed the prayer that they wrote for a new community. That prayer has been posted on the *cmglobal* web page. I would encourage all of you to join and pray for the success of this merger, **and at the same time giving others the grace to consider similar mergers where needed.**
13. We discussed issues regarding our three **international missions** of El Alto, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.
14. We have a report from Father José Antonio Ubillús, the **Assistant for Missions**. At the end of 2007 Father Ubillús produced a CD

in Spanish, French and English in PowerPoint style entitled “The Mission in a Globalized World.” Among his 2008 projects are securing scholarships in the “CIAM” program, a course on spirituality and animation for missionaries. Four different members of the Congregation of the Mission have participated in this course the last two years.

15. The General Council discussed some **criteria to be followed for preparation of missionaries** for new experiences.

The General Council made a decision that when sending missionaries to provinces that have requested assistance, they will be asked to comply with these criteria as well as to reflect seriously on the document of the Congregation, *Ratio Missionum*.

16. We studied pending cases for **volunteers for missions** as well as new candidates. We had five new volunteers. We hope that two can be placed shortly and the other three after a couple of years in their present ministries. Among these new candidates are confreres who have responded positively to the special Mission Appeal that I made concerning mainland China. As I reflect on this matter of volunteers, the petitions come in steadily, and although we are not able to place all the confreres immediately, we have a guarantee from them and their Visitors that we will be able to do so within a two or three year period. So little by little we are able to respond to the needs of the Church, many times outside the traditional structures of the Congregation of the Mission.

“... faithful to the gospel..., [we] should take care to open up new ways and use new means adapted to the circumstances of time and place” (C 2).

Your brother in Saint Vincent,



G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

MISSION AWARD 2008

Rome, 27 March 2008

To All Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Visitor,

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

I invite you and your council to submit a project from your province for the Mission Award 2008. Below, I have included information you will find helpful in identifying a project eligible for the award. You will also find an application form with this letter. The completed application should be submitted to the Econome General by **June 2, 2008**. The complete application must be signed by the Visitor or Vice-Visitor.

Please note:

- 1) Only one application can be submitted for each province or vice-province.
- 2) The application submitted must be no more than three pages in length.
- 3) Applications received after **June 2, 2008** will not be considered.

“MISSION AWARD”

This is an award given to acknowledge and support a specific project, developed by an individual confrere or group of confreres, which promotes in a noteworthy way their missionary work. This award will be granted annually from 2006 to 2016.

Some criteria for choosing the recipient(s) of the award:

1. The project submitted should promote popular missions or missions *ad gentes* in a noteworthy way.
2. Creative formation programs for popular missions or missions *ad gentes* would be eligible.
3. Teams of confreres who have developed a creative missionary project, either for popular missions or for missions *ad gentes*, may submit a proposal.

4. Teams who have developed a creative project for a new possible mission will also be eligible.
5. Confreres or teams submitting proposals for the creative use of media in missions will also be eligible.
6. Creative programs for formation of the clergy in mission territories will also be eligible.

The Mission Award will be granted at most to five projects on July 30, 2008, chosen by the Superior General with his council. The amount of \$100,000 will be divided equally among the projects that have been granted the award. The amount of the award to each individual project will be distributed over two years. The first half of the award money will be given to the project on July 30, 2008. The second half of the award money will be given on July 30, 2009 after the Superior General has received a report on how the first half of the award money was used.

I look forward to receiving an application from your province.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." with a stylized flourish at the end.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

**APPLICATION
FOR THE MISSION AWARD 2008**

How does the project fit the criteria of the Mission Award?

Provide a brief history of the project?

What is the goal of the project?

A “goal” is a simple, one-sentence statement about the general purpose of the project that addresses the specific need stated above. Example: “To train members of the Vincentian Family to give missions in St. Vincent’s Parish.”

What are the objectives for the project?

The “objectives” are specific, concrete and measurable results that accomplish the goal of the project. Example: *“To hold missionary training workshops for 5 consecutive Saturdays in the parish hall.”*

If the project should receive the Mission Award, how will the award money be utilized to meet the goal of the project?

If the project should receive the Mission Award, who will be responsible for submitting the report to the Superior General on how the award money was utilized? Please note that the second half of the award money will not be distributed unless this report has been received.

Signature of the Visitor or Vice-Visitor

Date

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2010 CONVOCATION LETTER

Rome, 14 April 2008

To All the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Confreres,

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

Our Constitutions 107 4° instructs the Superior General to convoke the General Assembly, and I hereby do so with this letter.

With the consent of my Council, I have decided that, in light of the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the death of St. Vincent de Paul, the General Assembly be held in Paris, France. The Assembly will begin on Monday June 28, 2010 at 9 in the morning and will end on Friday July 16. The confreres are asked to arrive either on June 26 or 27 and to leave on July 17 or 18. The Assembly itself will be held in the large auditorium of the Daughters of Charity having at our disposition the facility for simultaneous translation. Small group discussions will also be carried out in the same location.

All our liturgical celebrations, that is morning and evening prayer as well as the Eucharist, will be celebrated in the Maison Mère of the rue de Sèvres. We will have at our disposition the main chapel and a number of the smaller chapels throughout the house for our small group gatherings. All our meals will be taken in Maison Mère of the rue de Sèvres as well. Housing will be in the Maison Mère or localities within a very short walking distance of the rue de Sèvres.

The motto chosen is:

350 and Beyond — the Mission continues

The theme is:

“Faithful to the gospel... attentive to the signs of the times... open up new ways and use new means... remain in a continual state of renewal” (C 2)

It is our hope that we harmonize with the previous General Assembly, particularly its final document, with the meeting of the Visitors in Mexico which focused on on-going formation. Our desire is to ever deepen our identity in light of our charism which is given concrete expression in and through our mission.

Part of the task of the Domestic Assemblies, which will be spelled out by the Preparatory Commission, will include: an evaluation of our living out of the final document of the Assembly of 2004; a deep reflection on the importance of initial and on-going formation as a way of sharpening our identity; the continuing study of our Statutes as prepared by the Commission on Statutes.

Other matters which make up the purpose of the General Assembly will be discussed in way to include a broad-based participation of the members of the Congregation of the Mission. Such matters are: an in-depth study of the reality of the poor in the world in which we live today in the different places where the Congregation is established; an update on the state of the Congregation in its entirety and in its parts; studying of other postulata presented by the Provincial Assemblies or individual confreres; the election of the Superior General, Vicar General and Assistants.

As previously stated, the Preparatory Commission has been established and will have its first meeting during the *tempo forte* in June 2008.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

FEATURE

Vincentian Solidarity

Presentation

by Julio Suescun Olcoz, C.M.

Editor of "Vincentiana"

In its May-June 2007, no. 3 issue, **Vincentiana**, presented the International Meeting of Visitors of the C.M. in Mexico. That issue centered on the nucleus of the theme: "The Continuing Formation of the Missionary, Today." Even then, we foresaw the convenience of offering to the whole Congregation of the Mission, a reflection which was done at the Meeting of the Visitors in Mexico on other themes, perhaps not as central, but were part of the program and which were discussed by the Visitors during the whole second week of the meeting.

Vincentiana presents to you the topic of "Vincentian Solidarity." It is not so much a theoretical reflection as a practical exposition of what an expression of solidarity is, as it is being performed in the Congregation, from the point of view of the encouragement and animation of the Superior General and the Curia.

Everything started with the professorial exposition of the Econome General who, summarizing what had been communicated from the different offices of the Curia found in the various offices listed in the Catalogue, outlined what came to be known as "A Solidarity Plan on the Move." The reader will be able to see what the plan means by reading the articles of Fathers Gouldrick, Foley, Pieber and the communication of Bro. Campbell.

Speaking of the Vincentian Solidarity, one cannot leave aside the effort which the Congregation, with the whole Vincentian Family, is making in order to understand and put into practice Systemic Change. From the Commission on Systemic Change, Father Maloney and Mrs. Patricia Nava, speak of this point.

As happened to us with the issue of the **Vincentiana** dedicated to the central theme of the Meeting of the Visitors in Mexico,¹ the limitation of space prevents us from talking about the many activities which the Congregation of the Mission is performing around the world and which would merit to be pondered for the glory of God and the encouragement and animation of all.

This issue of **Vincentiana** is completed with the long study on the “Continuing Formation of the Religious.” This study was asked of Cyril de Souza, S.D.B., for the meeting on January 2007, on how to help the Confreres in difficulty, and which was not published in the issue which **Vincentiana** dedicated to that meeting. The interest which the Congregation showed on this theme, intensified with the reflection of Mexico, will surely find the publication of this article opportune.

(Translation: ROLANDO DELAGOZA SOLLEZA, C.M.)

¹ *Vincentiana* n. 3, May-June 2007.

Solidarity in the Congregation

Our Efforts at Economic Collaboration



by John William Gouldrick, C.M.
Treasurer General

I have been asked to speak today about the economic collaboration that has been growing among us in the Congregation. I am willing to do that.

Let me begin with the three presentations you heard during this meeting, all of which in some way made reference to our growing spirit of economic solidarity or economic collaboration: the Treasurer General's report, the report from

the Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office, and the presentation by the Director of International Development. What may not be so evident is that all three offices participate in a financial plan that is operative in the Curia. As best as I can, I would like to present that plan.

The plan, inaugurated by Father Maloney, has a vision; it has goals; and it has strategies. The vision simply stated is this: that those provinces with minimal income to meet their expenses might be able to stabilize their financial resources in the near future.

There are three integrated goals set forth to realize this vision of financial stabilization in provinces that are struggling financially. First, the plan aims at strengthening the cash flow position of these provinces. In other words, the supply of money flowing into these provinces is less than the demand for money to flow out of them. So, they need an increase of cash inflow in order to pay their bills. Second, the plan seeks to enable provinces to undertake capital improvements to support their mission, even as they are facing debts every day. Capital improvements are equivalently various small or large projects beyond ordinary expenses and would include, for example, obtaining computers for a school program. Finally, the

third goal talks in terms of securing long-term financial stability in these provinces.

Let us go back to the first goal: improving the cash flow situation of these provinces. Father Maloney, at the beginning of his term, felt keenly the lack of resources in the Curia for helping provinces. Provinces would appeal to him for assistance and he found himself unable to provide significant help to them. Furthermore, at this time he was also trying to launch a new project: namely, the establishment of new international missions. These missions too, he realized, would need financial support, if they were going to serve their areas effectively.

While wondering, and no doubt praying, about how to supplement the Curia's cash shortage, a very important event occurred at that time. Father Maloney met with a representative of a charitable foundation. The foundation let him know that it was willing to help him.

Their conversations led to a strategy for the first goal, the strengthening of the cash needs of the Curia, so it could provide more significant help for the new international missions and for provinces appealing for aid. The strategy was to set up an endowment fund, known as IMF: 2000.

The foundation, it is important to note, in its offer to help build this endowment fund set forth two conditions: first, its name was not to be revealed; second, before granting foundation money, it wanted the Curia to raise the same amount of money the foundation was willing to give. Thus, the foundation was really offering what is known as a matching grant.

Father Maloney took up the challenge to find matching funds. He made an appeal to a number of provinces to collaborate with him in providing these funds. As a result of his efforts, donations from some European Provinces, along with donations from the five Provinces in the United States, enabled the Curia to set up over two five-year periods not one, but two endowment funds to provide financial support for the new international missions and for provinces experiencing financial difficulties. Today, IMF: 2000 and IMF: 2004, have a market value of nearly \$12 million. The income from these endowments, as I mentioned in my earlier talk, provided 46% of the total amount distributed this year in the Mission Distribution Fund — in other words, over \$600,000 of the \$1.3 million distributed.

Struggling provinces still have cash flow problems, but some of their burden has been lightened because of the economic collaboration of the European and American provinces, who gave of their resources to provide matching funds for this endowment.

We return now to the second goal: enabling provinces to make capital improvements. The strategy for implementing this goal was to set up a Vincentian Solidarity Office and a Vincentian Solidarity Fund. The very clear report from Brother Peter we heard at this meeting filled us in on the large projects and the micro-projects financed by the Vincentian Solidarity Fund, since its inception. My point here is to reaffirm that Brother Peter's work integrates into the Curia's economic collaboration plan. He does not work independently of the Curia, although full decision-making power over the awarding of project grants has been delegated to him.

Finally, we return to the third goal: the establishing of long-term financial stability for provinces. The strategy for attaining this goal is the construction of endowment funds or, as we call them, patrimonial funds. The distinctive features of endowment funds, as many of you know, are these: The principal or corpus of the fund is not to be liquidated; that is, converted into cash in order to meet current expenses. Only the return — namely, interest, dividends and capital gains on the investment — can be used and the return on the investment must be used only for the purposes for which the fund was established. To use the return from these endowment funds for any other purpose is a serious violation of justice. We asked donors to help with a particular cause. They helped, and now we are bound in justice to do precisely what they willingly helped us to do.

A number of patrimonial funds have been established. Some are completed, some are in the process of being completed, and some are just beginning. These funds, from the perspective of civil law, have different "owners," if you will; that is to say, speaking from an accounting perspective, these funds are reported on various balance sheets. Thus, in some cases the "owner" of the patrimonial fund is the sponsoring province of a mission from which a new province originated. For example, the Province of Holland has a patrimonial fund for Ethiopia. The Province of Ireland has a patrimonial fund for the Vice-Province of Nigeria. The Province of Naples has a patrimonial fund for the Province of Saint Justin De Jacobis.

Then there are provinces that have formed a relationship with financially struggling provinces and have set up a patrimonial fund or are in the process of doing so. Thus, the USA South Province has a patrimonial fund for the Province of North India. The Eastern Province of the United States is currently constructing a patrimonial fund for seven different provinces, which it hopes to have completed by the year 2010. The Province of Turin is currently building a patrimonial fund for Madagascar. The money handed over to these funds derives predominantly from the generosity of the various

sponsoring provinces, and, in some cases, from the generous matching funds of the charitable organization.

Finally, our current Superior General, Father Gregory Gay, saw the need to begin a new patrimonial fund. This one was to appear on the balance sheet of the Curia. The charitable foundation, referred to earlier, has offered to provide a matching grant for this fund as well. Nine provinces were originally included in the Curia's patrimonial fund. Also, as Father Carl Pieber mentioned in his presentation, \$2.5 million is also designated in this fund for assistance to three international works under the direct supervision of the Superior General, namely, JMV, MISEVI, and AMM. Actually, two of the nine provinces included in this fund, through a special donation given, recently reached the goal set for them, leaving only seven provinces as participants in the Curia's patrimonial fund.

The Curia contributes \$100,000 annually to this patrimonial fund. The Curia looks to others to join with it in supporting this new fund, but believes it cannot keep asking the same provinces to keep giving over and over; it therefore has looked to other provinces for help. These new provinces are mainly from Europe, but, happily we report, for the first time there is a contribution coming in from Latin America.

Three types of relationships exist between the Curia and these newcomers to the collaboration or solidarity program. First, some of these new donor provinces have submitted a written document, pledging to contribute to the Curia's patrimonial fund, and these provinces have been faithful to their commitment. Second, other new donor provinces have been contributing faithfully to the fund, but without a formal written document. Finally, there are others who have stepped forward with a promise to help, but for various reasons have not been able to provide the details covering the amount of assistance they hope to provide.

And now, I must add this point: While the donors to the new patrimonial fund have been generous, it is also the case that the funds coming in from these new sources have not been sufficient to match the potential grant offered by the foundation. The Curia has shared with the foundation the challenge it has been experiencing in finding matching grants. The foundation, while understanding the Curia's challenge, nonetheless has preferred to hold fast to its requirement for matching funds. It therefore has asked the Curia to consider setting up an international development office as a possible means for obtaining these matching funds. In response to the request, Father Gregory has appointed Carl Pieber as the international development officer. Carl is trying, with your cooperation, to get this office off the ground. Carl's first priority is to

find matching funds for the Curia's patrimonial fund and possibly for other patrimonial funds to be established in the future.

Let me conclude with three observations. First, I hope you have been able to detect from this presentation how there has been an expansion of provinces joining or promising to join in on this program of financial collaboration. But I also want to mention that the Curia's plan is not the only example of financial collaboration in the worldwide Congregation. The Province of Toulouse, which I mentioned last week, also contributes to provinces with financial needs. Toulouse, as far as I know, puts no restrictions on the funds it distributes, but my guess is that its distribution is compatible with the Curia's first goal, namely, the strengthening of the cash flow position of these provinces. Other provinces help with CIF; others contribute to the international AMM; and still others, in a quiet way, provide assistance to provinces in need, especially if there had been a previous relationship to these provinces. Every conference has at least one of its provinces sending a donation to help at least one activity in the Congregation.

Second, it has been mentioned to me, or has gotten back to me, that there are provinces looking to join in on what has been moving forward. Perhaps this presentation might assist provinces in finding a way to enter into this spirit of economic collaboration. If a province wants to help, it need only think of the three goals. Would a province like to help another province find relief for its immediate cash flow problems? If so, it can contribute to the Curia's Mission Distribution Fund. Would a province like to help another province to introduce some capital improvements, supportive of its mission? If so, it can contribute to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund. Would a province prefer to contribute to the long-term goal of financial stability for struggling provinces? If so, it can speak with Carl Pieber about sending a contribution to the new patrimonial fund or it can contact the Superior General or me directly.

Finally, I want to offer a comment on a potentially difficult and sensitive topic: the transfer of a portfolio from one province to another. Technically, we are speaking here about transferring civil title or civil ownership of the investment portfolio.

Probably all of us need to recall now and then a few points. First, from our perspective as a Congregation in the Church, we do not own these patrimonial funds. These funds have been entrusted to us for our care and preservation and growth in order to respond to the needs of the poor now and in the future. We do not own the patrimony of the poor; we exercise responsible stewardship over their patrimony.

Second, again from our perspective of being a Congregation called to serve the poor, the transfer of funds should not be perceived as a gift to another province. The transfer of funds to other provinces is an extension of our sharing stewardship over the patrimony of the poor entrusted to the whole Congregation. In this expanded notion, provinces, which know well the struggles attached to poverty, can become stewards themselves over resources entrusted to them for the pastoral benefit of the people given to them.

The third concluding observation I wish to make may have a little bite to it. It would seem that there are two components to good financial stewardship. The first component is to have something over which to exercise stewardship: namely, money. The other component of stewardship, however, is the exercise of responsible, disciplined financial management over what has been entrusted to us.

To date, much effort has been put into obtaining money for provinces in need. The new frontier, however, is to encourage and help provinces learn management techniques. For example, those unfamiliar with investing endowment funds or accounting for endowment funds would benefit from having at least one confrere learn and develop skills in this area. Investments are far more complex than checking and savings accounts. Perhaps some here would have some best practices on good financial practices. I would be happy to hear from them. I would be especially happy to hear from provinces anticipating the reception of a patrimonial fund as to how they might collaborate in learning how they might adopt sound policies geared toward the practice of sound fiscal management.

Thank you for your time. Thank you for your collaboration.

Talk on the Vincentian Solidarity Office



by Peter A. Campbell, C.M.

*Director
of the Vincentian Solidarity Office*

Introduction

Good morning! Thank you for welcoming me to the Visitors' Meeting. I am happy to be with you today to speak about the Vincentian Solidarity Office or VSO. Many of you here in the room are already familiar with the services of the VSO. The outline of my talk is divided into eight parts:

- I. The Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)
- II. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF)
- III. The Eligibility List for VSO Service
- IV. How to Apply for Financial Assistance for VSO Projects
- V. How to Apply for VSF Micro-Project Grants
- VI. The VSO Bulletin and VSO Website
- VII. A Progress Report on the Vincentian Solidarity Office
- VIII. Some Examples of Funded Projects

I. The Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)

Our former Superior General, Father Robert Maloney, C.M., and his Council established the VSO on June 15, 2002. The goal of the VSO is: *"To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation of the Mission with obtaining funds for their works and needs."* The VSO is an optional service that a province, vice-province or mission can use to help finance projects that benefit our confreres or the people they serve in their apostolates. The VSO officially opened for service on January 1, 2003.

The VSO is a program of the General Curia. The Superior General and his Council supervise the activities of the VSO. The staff of the VSO consists of two people. Father Maloney appointed me as the first Director of the VSO. Scott Fina, Ph.D., who is a married layman, joined the VSO as the Associate Director on July 12, 2004. The VSO is located at St. Vincent's Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is the Provincial House of the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States.

Our contact information at the VSO is as follows:

Vincentian Solidarity Office
500 East Cheltenham Avenue
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144
United States of America

Brother Peter A. Campbell, C.M. (Director)
+1 215-843-9018 (Telephone)
cmvso@yahoo.com (E-mail)

Scott Fina (Associate Director)
+1 215-848-1985, Extension 248 (Telephone)
sfina@cmphlsvs.org (E-mail)

+1 215-843-9361 (Fax)
www.famvin/vso (Website)

II. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF)

To help the VSO accomplish its goal, the Superior General and his Council established the Vincentian Solidarity Fund or VSF. The VSF is a fund belonging to the General Curia. The money in the VSF comes from contributions made by provinces, houses, confreres and others. The VSO administers the VSF with the approval of the Superior General and his Council and with the assistance of the Treasurer General.

The VSO uses the monies from the VSF for two purposes.

First, VSF monies are used to match up to 50% of the cash costs of a VSO project beyond the local contribution. The other 50% of the cash costs for a VSO project must come from other funding sources, e.g., grants from donor agencies. VSF matching funds are restricted and can only be released once monies are secured from other funding sources for a particular VSO project.

Second, VSF monies are used to award grants of up to \$ 5,000 United States Dollars (USD) for micro-projects. A VSF micro-project grant finances 100% of the expenses for a particular micro-project.

III. The Eligibility List for VSO Service

Our Superior General, Father Gregory Gay, C.M., and his Council revised and expanded the list of provinces, vice-provinces and missions eligible for VSO service in March of 2007.

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION PROVINCES, VICE-PROVINCES AND MISSIONS ELIGIBLE FOR VSO SERVICE <i>Organized under the Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia</i> <i>Approved by the Superior General and His Council in March of 2007</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>COVIAM</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Conference of the Visitors in Africa and Madagascar)</i></p> <p>Congo • Ethiopia • Madagascar • Mozambique * • Nigeria * • St. Justin de Jacobis •</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CEVIM</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Conference of Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission of Europe and the Orient)</i></p> <p>France - Paris (only Algeria, Cameroon and Vietnam) • France - Toulouse (only Iran) Hungary Italy - Naples (only Albania) Orient Portugal Slovakia • Slovenia (only Argentina) • Spain - Barcelona (only Honduras) • Spain - Salamanca (only Mozambique) Spain - Zaragoza (only Honduras) SS. Cyril & Methodius * •</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CLAPVI</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Latin American Conference of Vincentian Provinces)</i></p> <p>Argentina Brazil - Curitiba Brazil - Fortaleza • Brazil - Rio de Janeiro Central America • Chile Colombia • Costa Rica * • Cuba • Ecuador • Mexico • Peru Puerto Rico • Venezuela</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NCV</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(National Conference of Visitors of the United States)</i></p> <p>USA - Eastern (only Panama) USA - Midwest (only Kenya)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GENERAL CURIA</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(International Missions)</i></p> <p>Bolivia • Papua New Guinea Solomon Islands •</p>

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION PROVINCES, VICE-PROVINCES AND MISSIONS ELIGIBLE FOR VSO SERVICE <i>Organized under the Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia</i> <i>Approved by the Superior General and His Council in March of 2007</i>	
<u>APVC</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<i>(Asia Pacific Visitors' Conference)</i>	* Vice-Provinces • Received VSO Service
Australia (only Fiji) •	
China	Provinces: 36
India - North •	Vice-Provinces: 4
India - South •	International Missions of the General Curia: 3
Indonesia •	
Philippines	Total: 43

The provinces, vice-provinces and missions eligible for VSO service are organized under the five Visitors' Conferences and the General Curia. Please note that some provinces can only apply for VSO service for their missions in foreign countries. For example, under the National Conference of Visitors of the United States (NCV), the Eastern Province can only solicit VSO assistance for its mission in Panama.

The new list includes 43 territories: 36 provinces, 4 vice-provinces and the 3 international missions of the General Curia. Of the 47 provinces, 4 vice-provinces and 1 region listed in the Catalogue of the Congregation of the Mission for 2006-2007, 40 of these 52 territories or 77% of the international Congregation is eligible to solicit financial assistance from the VSO for projects.

The VSO funded projects in 58% or 25 of the 43 provinces, vice-provinces and missions on the new eligibility list for VSO service.

IV. How to Apply for Financial Assistance for VSO Projects

A visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia should use the "VSO Project Application Form" in English to request assistance from the VSO for the funding of a project. The application form asks for basic details about the project:

general information, problem statement, goal, objectives, method, budget and evaluation.

Applications that satisfy all of the following six criteria approved by the Superior General and his Council will be accepted for VSO service:

1. The visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia approves and sends the “VSO Project Application Form” to the Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office.
2. The “VSO Project Application Form” is correctly filled out.
3. The province, vice-province or mission submitting the “VSO Project Application Form” is eligible for VSO service, as determined by the Superior General and his Council.
4. The project is a work of the Congregation of the Mission and benefits the needs of the confreres of the province, vice-province or mission, or the people they serve.
5. There is a reasonable chance of securing funds for the project.
6. The Vincentian Solidarity Office has the resources to work on the project.

Once a project is accepted for VSO service, the VSO staff will do the following:

- Investigate sources of funding for the project.
- Write, submit and keep track of grant proposals for the project.
- Transfer grant funds awarded to the project with the assistance of the Treasurer General.
- Ensure that all required financial and evaluation reports for grants are filed on time with donor agencies.

VSO projects can receive matching funds from the VSF.

V. How to Apply for VSF Micro-Project Grants

A visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia should use the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” in English, French or Spanish to request a grant from the VSF of up to \$ 5,000 USD for a micro-project. The application form asks for basic details about the project: general information, problem statement, goal, objectives, method, budget and evaluation.

Applications that satisfy all of the following seven criteria approved by the Superior General and his Council are eligible to be considered for a VSF micro-project grant:

1. The visitor, vice-visitor or superior of an international mission of the General Curia approves and sends the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” to the Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office.
2. The “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” is correctly filled out.
3. The province, vice-province or mission submitting the “VSF Micro-Project Grant Application Form” is eligible for VSO service, as determined by the Superior General and his Council.
4. The micro-project is a work of the Congregation of the Mission and benefits the needs of the confreres of the province, vice-province or mission, or the people they serve.
5. The VSF micro-project grant is for \$ 5,000 USD or less.
6. The Vincentian Solidarity Fund has the financial resources to award the VSF micro-project grant.
7. A province, vice-province or mission can only receive one (1) VSF micro-project grant per funding year (May 1 to April 30).

The VSO reviews and decides on applications for VSF micro-project grants four times a year in September, November, February and May.

VI. The VSO Bulletin and VSO Website

The VSO publishes a two-page VSO Bulletin four times a year in March, June, October and December. The General Secretary distributes the VSO Bulletin by e-mail in English, French and Spanish to all of the provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation. It is my hope that you, as Visitors and Vice-Visitors, will distribute the VSO Bulletin to the houses and confreres in your provinces and vice-provinces. Each issue of the VSO Bulletin contains a complete list of all the VSF micro-project grants awarded in the previous month and describes two or three funded projects. Copies of all VSO Bulletins can be found on the VSO website.

The address of the VSO website is www.famvin.org/vso. The VSO website is a simple and functional presentation of the services of the VSO in English, French or Spanish. Most importantly, you can download the application forms in either Microsoft Word or PDF file format from the website. Please visit the VSO website to review the eligibility requirements for VSO services, download the application forms and read about funded projects in the VSO Bulletins.

VII. A Progress Report on the Vincentian Solidarity Office

During the last 4½ years, the VSO accepted 74 VSO projects.

Number of VSO Projects	
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007	
Year	Number
2003	7
2004	10
2005	17
2006	32
2007	8
Total	74

Of these 74 VSO projects, 69 or 93% received either full funding (62 or 84%) or partial funding (7 or 9%).

VSO Projects		
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007		
Status	Number	Percentage
Fully funded	62	84%
Partially funded	7	9%
Not yet funded	3	4%
Withdrawn	2	3%
Total	74	100%

The VSO distributed a total of \$ 2,185,476 USD in funding for VSO projects. The VSO secured \$ 1,175,758 USD from various funding sources, and the VSF supplied \$ 1,009,718 USD in matching funds.

Money for VSO Projects	
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007	
Source	Amount in USD
VSO	\$ 1,175,758
VSF	\$ 1,009,718
Total	\$ 2,185,476

The program to award VSF micro-project grants began two years ago. Since that time, the VSO awarded 32 VSF micro-project grants totaling \$ 160,000 USD.

VSF Micro-Project Grants		
July 1, 2005 to April 30, 2007		
Year	Number	Amount in USD
2005-2006	15	\$ 75,000
2006-2007	17	\$ 85,000
Total	32	\$ 160,000

To sum up the progress report, the VSO provided \$ 2,345,476 USD to fund 101 projects from 25 provinces, vice-provinces and international missions of the Congregation of the Mission.

Summary of Progress Report on the VSO			
January 1, 2003 to May 31, 2007			
	Funded Projects	Amount in USD	Number
VSO Projects	69	\$ 2,185,476	
VSF Micro-Projects Grants	32	\$ 160,000	
Provinces			19
Vice-Provinces			4
International Missions of the General Curia			2
Total	101	\$ 2,345,476	25

VIII. Some Examples of Funded Projects

To give you some examples of the types of projects funded by the VSO, I have selected only one project from 22 countries around the world. This is not a complete list of all of the projects funded by the VSO in these countries nor does it include every country that received VSO assistance.

	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNDED PROJECT
1	MEXICO	School expenses, kitchen equipment and food supplies for homeless street children at the Casa-Hogar sponsored by "Juventud y Vida, A.C." at the Parroquia de Santa Anna in Cuautla, Mexico
2	BOLIVIA	Food supplies for the nutritional feeding program for children in daycare at the "Guarderías San Francisco" of the Parroquia San Francisco de Humanata, Bolivia
3	NORTH INDIA	Construction of 14 water wells for children in school hostels operated by the North Indian Province in the State of Orissa, India
4	HONDURAS	Funding for a prevention project for youth called APREDES: "Amigos Previniendo la entrada al Mundo de las Drogas, Delincuencia y Explotación Sexual" sponsored by the "Amigos Para Siempre" program of the "Asociación de Padres Paulinos" in the City of San Pedro Sula, Honduras
5	COLOMBIA	Opening of the "Albergue para Destechados Julia Chau de Rojas" shelter for homeless men in Popayán, Colombia
6	CAMEROON	Opening of the "Centre de Formation Informatique St. Vincent de Paul" for young people in Nkol Afemé (Yaoundé), Cameroon
7	MADAGASCAR	Construction of a channel and retention basin for rainwater at the "Centre de Formation Technique et Professionnelle d'Akandrina," Madagascar
8	FIJI	Funding for the St. Vincent's College Hostel Farming Project at St. John the Apostle Parish in Natovi, Fiji
9	EL SALVADOR	Furniture, computer equipment and materials for the formation of pastoral agents at the Parroquia San Antonio de Padua in Laguna Seca, El Salvador
10	ETHIOPIA	Construction of St. Justin de Jacobis Church in Ambo, Ethiopia
11	UKRAINE	Construction of the Pastoral Center of Divine Mercy at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church in Perechin, Ukraine
12	ARGENTINA	Construction of a gymnasium for the "Centro Recreativo y Deportivo Medalla Milagrosa of the Parroquia Virgen de la Medalla Milagrosa" in San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina

	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION OF THE FUNDED PROJECT
13	CUBA	Construction of a security wall and the restoration of the altar and sanctuary at the Iglesia San Francisco de Asís in Santiago de Cuba, Republic of Cuba
14	BRAZIL	Reconditioned boat for pastoral work at the Paróquia de São José in Tucuruí, Brazil
15	NIGERIA	Construction of St. Justin's Seminary for internal seminarists in Ogobia, Nigeria
16	TANZANIA	Construction of De Paul Seminary for philosophy and theology students in Morogoro, Tanzania
17	SLOVAKIA	Furniture and equipment for the chapel in the Provincial House and the Missionary Priest Seminary for theology students in Bratislava, Slovakia
18	HAITI	Computers and furniture for the aspirants' study room at the Mission House in Port-au-Prince, Haiti
19	ERITREA	Computer equipment and a photocopier machine for the philosophy and theology students at Mary Immaculate Seminary in Ambagagliano and the new formation house in Adi-Shiel in Asmara, Eritrea
20	CONGO	Plumbing repairs at the "Scolasticat St. Vincent de Paul" for philosophy and theology students in Kimwenza-Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo
21	SOUTH INDIA	Jeep for the theology students at "Vincentian Vidya Sadan" in Pune, India
22	ECUADOR	Pickup truck for the promotion of vocations and animation of the Vincentian Marian Youth (JMV) in Ecuador

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to thank the members of the General Curia for establishing and supporting the ministry of the VSO. I also wish to express a word of gratitude to the Visitors of the provinces that made contributions to the VSF. Lastly, I ask you to please keep the work of the VSO in your prayers. Thank you!

The Congregation's Work as NGO at the United Nations



by Joseph P. Foley, C.M.

*Vincentian NGO Representative
to the United Nations*

I want to begin by thanking Fr. Greg for this opportunity to write to you about the Congregation's work as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the United Nations. I will restate the mandate given by the Superior General. I also hope to provide an example of how the NGO Office functions, and I will offer some suggestions for closer collaboration between the Office and the Provinces.

1. The Congregation of the Mission at the UN

In our application for affiliation with the UN, Bob Maloney wrote: "The Congregation of the Mission's principal focus is on the economically poor. Its founder, Vincent de Paul (1581-1660), is well known internationally for organizing groups to assist the most needy. The Congregation began in France in 1625 and has now spread to over 80 countries. It has close ties, and many cooperative projects, with other branches of the 'Vincentian Family,' which consists of various groups founded by Vincent de Paul himself or founded later by others who shared his original inspiration. Among such groups are: the International Association of Charity (AIC), which has 260,000 members, the Daughters of Charity, which has 25,500 members, the Vincent de Paul Society which has 900,000 members and various youth groups which have more than 200,000 members. A recent study identifies more than 268 institutes for educational and charitable works that have been founded in the spirit of Vincent de Paul over the past 380 years."

Specifically, the NGO mandate is contained in the description of our principal focus: economically poor persons. *“Our members focus on self-promotion, education, relief, evangelization of persons who live in situations of poverty; and we assist them in changing the structures that keep people in poverty.” In the designation of our areas of interest, we named: economic and social development; peacekeeping/peacemaking and literacy/education.*

This mandate as it stands is still very helpful. It can be acted on in several ways: one, by initiating or participating in working groups that are concerned directly with the issues spelled out in the mandate; and two, by working on “crosscutting” issues, e.g., HIV/AIDS, malaria, inadequate clean water and sanitation, the situation of refugees. These issues are, in most instances, poverty issues, human rights issues, peace issues, education issues. The basis for selecting what to work on in any given year is compliance with the mandate and the practical judgment on what stands the best chance of making an impact.

2. The Work of the NGO Office

NGO representatives organize themselves into short-term or long-term working groups in order to influence some aspect of global policy that the UN is addressing. Some examples are the NGO Committee on Poverty Eradication, the NGO Committee on the Trafficking of Persons, or the War in Iraq, the Working Group on HIV/AIDS, or the NGO Committee on Economic and Social Development.

The working groups and committees produce working papers and shadow reports; they work with the relevant departments of the UN Secretariat and other international organizations; and they lobby governments and sponsor public forums. One recent public forum was to support church witnesses who produced a report, **Let the Stones Cry Out**, on the extra-judicial killings in the Philippines. The working group on Poverty Eradication published one useful document called, **Best Practices in Poverty Eradication**, and another called, **Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty: the Rights of the Poor**.

A recent example of a working group activity is the preparation by the NGO Committee on Migration for a Global Forum on Migration

Global Forum on Migration and Development-Background

a) In September 2006, the United Nations General Assembly convened a High-Level Dialogue to discuss the connection

between migration and development. The former Secretary General Kofi Annan vigorously supported this Dialogue, and believed it should mark the beginning of inter-governmental discussions about migration and development. He proposed the creation of a **Global Forum**, which would make (1) new policy ideas more widely known, (2) catalyze constructive conversations about the issues among governments, (3) add value to existing regional consultations, and (4) encourage an integrated approach to migration and development at both the national and international levels.

More than 127 countries were represented at the High-Level Dialogue, the majority at ministerial level. Following a constructive debate, more than two-thirds of those present at the UN meeting expressed support for the creation of a permanent *Global Forum on Migration and Development*. The Belgian government offered to host the Forum's inaugural session in Brussels in 2007.

b) Aim and Agenda of the 'Global Forum on Migration and Development'

"The Global Forum is a government-led initiative that is open to all United Nations Member States. It is not a decision-making or policymaking body. It is a voluntary process that wants to address issues related to migration and development in a manner that goes beyond mere analysis. It aims to identify best practices, promote the exchange of experiences, identify obstacles to smart policymaking, explore and adopt innovative approaches, and enhance cooperation among countries."

Among the priority topics to be discussed in Belgium are: 1. Human Capital Development and Labor Mobility: Maximizing Opportunities and Minimizing Risks, 2. Remittances and other Diaspora Resources: Increasing their Volume and Development Value, and 3. Enhancing Institutional and Policy Coherence, and Promoting Partnerships.

c) The NGO Committee on Migration

In the world today there are 191 million migrants. When one considers this fact, it becomes obvious that most people are "migrating" to get away from poverty, corruption, violence and war, and the inability to make a living at home. Migration is a key poverty issue. The newly formed NGO Committee on Migration believes that the reason the meeting is being held in Belgium rather than in the United Nations is that countries want to avoid having to deal with the constraints of UN treaties and

international agreements. The Committee further believes that without NGO advocacy, migrants will continue to be treated largely as one more factor in the production chain in the global marketplace.

To give voice to these concerns two members of the Committee on Migration have become members of a Steering Committee that was set up to advise the Belgian government on the Global Forum. The Migration Committee members have written letters and visited the Missions of the governments that will attend the Forum. The Migration Committee created “talking points” that speak to the NGO agenda. (The NGO agenda: migrants cannot simply be considered as “commodities” or reduced to “labor units” in a global marketplace. Migration needs to be treated in a more integrated fashion, one that is person-centered; and within a human rights framework. Migration policy should be global).

In preparing for the Forum, the United Nations University has greatly helped both the governments and the NGOs by providing briefing papers and conducting seminars on such topics as (1) Building Partnerships, (2) Facilitating Migrants’ Participation in Society, (3) International Migration Law, and (4) Diasporas as Development Actors. As your representative, I participated in several of these seminars and found them very useful.

It should be said that if Belgium had not offered to host this Migration Forum, it is doubtful that it would have taken place at all. Most countries that agreed to the Forum didn’t really want it. Most countries see migration as a “sovereignty” issue and they prefer bilateral negotiations between the “sending” countries and the “receiving” countries. In this type of agreement, the migrants are usually the losers.

By using this example, I want to show one way that NGOs work together and interface with governments and other international institutions. I also used the example of migration because most of us live in countries that send or receive migrants, or both.

3. Possibilities for further collaboration

Last year, I had the privilege of being a guest at the regional meeting of the Asia Pacific Visitors. I met the Provincials, learned about (and saw) some of the works and projects of the Provinces. I was also able to share with the Provincials in more detail some of the Congregation’s work at the UN. This year I will have a similar possibility when the Visitors of Africa meet in Kenya. Such meetings are personally enriching for everyone. They increase the effectiveness

of the NGO Office, and they are a good way of connecting ministry in the Provinces with advocacy at the UN.

I would welcome the chance to contact confreres who are responsible for justice and peace (or social) ministries in the Provinces. These contacts can open up fruitful avenues for collaboration. I am convinced that the United Nations Headquarters and its Regional Offices can provide a rich source of useful data, resources and contacts.

Finally, as the work of the newly created Commission on Systemic Change becomes available, it will almost certainly offer some additional possibilities for collaborating.

CONCLUSION

In 1999 the Congregation of the Mission was accredited as an NGO. At that time the AIC had already received its accreditation. So had the Elizabeth Ann Seton Federation. This year the Daughters of Charity will receive accreditation as an international NGO. And, the St. Vincent de Paul Society has appointed a person to shepherd its application through the accreditation process. It is clear that the Vincentian Family will soon be positioned to work more collaboratively, and with a stronger voice.

In the end, what matters is that global policies and agreements are translated into national policy for the benefit of people forced to live in poverty and for the benefit of the communities in which they live. That is why knowing the confreres and knowing the works are so valuable.

International Office of Development

by Carl Leo Pieber, C.M.

Director of the Office of Development

I. Introduction to Development

Once upon a time, a little boy walked to school everyday. On his way to school, he would pass a sculptor at his workshop. One day the boy passed the shop and saw in the window a very large square piece of marble. He saw the sculptor take a hammer and make the first hit on the stone. He laughed and thought that it will take a long time to break up that big stone into little rocks. Each day the boy passed the shop and saw the sculptor working on the marble. Finally, one morning on his way to school the boy saw the sculptor standing outside the store looking in through the window. When the boy approached, he too looked through the window. There it was a large marble lion. The boy was amazed. He turned to the sculptor and said, "Hey mister, how did you know there was a lion in that marble?"

The lion in the Congregation of the Mission is all the good that we do and our love of the poor and priestly formation. Most of the time, we are like the boy and do not know that the lion is there because we do not think about all the good that we do.

Development is the sculptor. Development shows others our work with the poor and priestly formation — our lion. Development invites others to look and see, to be converted to a new reality. Development chisels away at the block of disinterest and the unknown by small invitations to see Christ in the face of the poor — our lion.

Some think that this development aspect of our charism is unpleasant. We are totally unaccustomed to "show others our work with the poor." We do not "want" to do development. Yet in many ways, St. Vincent de Paul never failed to show others the poor and invite them into his work — to do development!

The purpose of this paper is to give information on what the International Office of Development is. To do this we need first to look at what development is and what development is NOT. One way to do this is by explaining development with comparisons to our

general understanding of St. Vincent de Paul (Roman numeral II of this paper). This will give us the value and purpose of the office.

Secondly, there are development characteristics to every major activity of a province. By highlighting these, we will be able to see how the Office functions (Roman numeral III of this paper).

II. Development and the Life of St. Vincent de Paul

Everyone thinks of development as asking for money. Sometimes they think that it includes asking for other types of resources. Rarely do they think that development is putting a plan into action by obtaining resources. Development is important to planning by looking at what can be done and what resources are possible. Development also activates the plan by getting others involved in doing it — through money or other resources.

No one was a better developer than St. Vincent de Paul. St. Vincent's charism was to serve and help the poor and priests in their formation. But it is also clear that he never intended to do this solely or without anyone else. An important characteristic of St. Vincent's charism is that he solicited others to join him to serve and help the poor. Easy instances of this solicitation are seen in his creation of organized help: The Ladies of Charity, the Confraternities of Charity, the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity.

If ministering to the poor was the goal, then the needs of the poor guided St. Vincent's development! His "development plan" could be seen as having three steps:

1. Seeing the poor or priests that surrounded him (identifying "those" to be served);
2. Determining what needed to be done to help them (what he was going to do); and,
3. Soliciting others to do this with him or give him money for others to do it.

To St. Vincent, the poor and priests were not isolated people from those with money. There were no "walls" or "castes" between them. Both were seen as connected in the Body of Christ. They had the same goal "to see and meet Christ." Through their interaction, they helped each other accept the salvation Christ offered.

Each of these three steps had details. Vincent tended to let the details be determined with consultation on the local level or by each entity. To do the details or activate the plan, and to continue the plan into the future, Vincent developed human and material resources for the local levels.

To help priests and the poor Vincent would establish Tuesday Conferences and confraternities. To support these, Vincent would send confreres and daughters. Asking men and women to be Confreres and Daughters can be seen as development of the “human endowment of continuing the works into the future.” Vincent developed resources for the priests and the poor that would last forever.

III. Provinces and Development: Leadership in the Charism

Following the charism of St. Vincent de Paul is to work with others’ help in reaching out to the poor and priests in their formation. In terms of development, every province plans or organizes and asks others to help. Every Vincentian ministry should have others involved with it — from the secretary, cook or volunteer to the staff, professional, or director.

Vincentian development is to write or put forth a consistent and compelling case or plan for a province’s activities that is open to others working with them (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres’ work with the poor and priestly formation. To write this compelling case, every province in some way follows the same three steps of St. Vincent.

1. Seeing the poor/priests that surround them (identifying the “those” to be served);
2. Determining what needs to be done to help them (what they are going to do); and,
3. Planning/soliciting others to do this with them or give them money to help the poor/priests.

Some wrongly think that development involves only the second part of step 3, solicitation of money. Contrary to this, development requires all three steps. Development most importantly requires that the details of steps one and two be stated as concretely as possible. This directly affects who to ask and how the donor can join with the ministry. Step 3 is successful when, as St. Vincent did, he showed and explained step one and two first.

As it is sometimes said, “The devil is in the details.” So too development and its activities are sometimes seen as the “detail devil.” Development needs the details so that it can interest others in the ministry. Without the details, steps one and two — who the poor are and what is to be done, are too general, vague and uninteresting. Generalities do not attract others or their gifts to join with the province to support their ministries.

For example on the provincial level, the first step can be the most difficult. Development needs or asks the province to focus its work with the poor or priests.

If we use ministries with the poor as an example, the difficulty can begin when the province has more than one ministry with the poor. Does the province try to center on one, two, three or four different ministries? Does it look at what is already being done by others? Does the province try to accept and do any or every ministry with the poor? How has the province previously taken on ministries with the poor?

For development to be successful, it needs a clear and specific message to give to potential helpers and donors. In the example with the poor, a province might state “We minister in poor parishes, secondary schools that serve the poor and prisons.” By default — that which is left out, the province is also saying that it does not emphasize ministry in hospitals, homeless shelters, or work training programs.

Development can happen when the Province focuses its ministries with the poor. Development needs the province to declare what it spends its resources on in ministry so that development can show others the goals and results of these ministries and solicit them to join. Development can not show others “generalities.” To solicit others to give to a fund without limits frightens donors. Their fear is that nothing will be accomplished and much will be wasted.

Step one, identifying the “poor” to be served, requires their description also. Development needs this description. Development needs the province to define and describe the need and the poor. If possible, the description and definition should include why the province thinks these “poor” are a priority as opposed to other types of poor.¹ It is with this definition and description that the province can proceed to answer step 2.

Step 2 determines what ministry or ministries the province will do and why. Sometimes the answer to this question is found in the answers to other related questions. For example, related questions might be:

1. What ministry or ministries might best serve these people?
2. Who among the province can do this ministry?
3. Can we train/form confreres to do this ministry?

¹ Many times the ministry has a historical basis in the province. The priority should include or indicate this also.

4. Can we estimate the costs in terms of manpower and resources to do this ministry?
5. Do we want to expand a current ministry?
6. Do we want to increase the quality of our ministry? Why?
7. Do we need to add another building or more facilities? Why?
8. Do we need to remodel the old building? Why?

The questions can be as numerous as the creativity of the confreres. It is the provincial and the assembly who work tirelessly to focus, order and prioritize questions according to the definition and description of the poor of step one. This work of step two is a critical function since it will shape the ministry, organize the work and imply a probability of success in the ministry.

With many of the questions of step 2, some of the answers can be self-evident. These self-evident answers can be revealing to a province. They can disclose how the Spirit has been working in the province in the past. They can reveal a historical or current distinction or particular thrust to the province's ministry. These revelations are distinctions that make the ministry(ies) separate from others. Development needs these distinctions to promote and invite others to the ministry(ies).

Let us look at a different example concerning priestly formation. Suppose the province in step 1 has determined that priests in the diocese need on-going formation — they are the “poor.” In step 2, the province decided that workshops are the best vehicle to do diocesan on-going formation. To do workshops, the confreres need a formal program of on-going theological formation. In deciding step 2, the province had to answer several questions.

Answers to these questions state the thrust or distinctions that development uses to attract donors. Some of these answers are:

1. That confreres need on-going formation for their holiness and ministry;
2. This on-going formation of confreres can be used for workshops with diocesan priests;
3. Workshops promote a continuing education for priests after the seminary;
4. A program does not currently exist for on-going formation;
5. On-going formation will improve future ministry in the diocese;
6. And so on and so on.

With these answers, development can interest and attract resources: scholarships, money, endowments, room and board, etc.

What is rightly assumed is that donors want holier priests that have the best training possible. This will attract Catholic donors who want good priestly ministry.

For development, the word “Vincentian” also is an answer that is part of our distinction and thrust that can attract donors. It means that every aspect of the ministry will be imbued with the preferential option for the poor. In some cases, “Vincentian” might exclude some ministries or works. Vincentian development declares that the poor have a primacy in the ministry of confreres and diocesan priests training.

In moving to the third step, much has informally already happened. The province has already determined who it will help, who will do the helping and what is needed. No matter what was decided in steps one and two, every ministry has an inbuilt appeal to certain constituencies because it is service to others and the community of confreres supports it.

The work (or formality) of the third step is putting down in words, stories and pictures steps one and two — the ministries and the province’s focus. Confreres are instrumental in doing this and promoting it. They can and do invite others instinctively to join them.

Techniques such as videos, magazines, websites, etc. are all tools that invite others to “come and see.” But please note that these techniques are used at this stage, not before it.

When we use any of these techniques, we must also define who the province wants to see this — are we showing this to older people to give gifts or younger people to join the community? Also, a website does little good if people do not know that it is there and what its use can be to them.

Who are the people that should be interested in or want this website? How will they find out about the website? With these two questions and their answers, a website can begin to take shape and define its content.

A second issue in step three or asking others to join us or give a gift, is to make it easy for them to respond. A website, brochure or video can create excitement about the ministry of the province but if there is not information on how to respond, the donor becomes discouraged. It is much better if the person can donate directly “on-line” or fill out a printed response card with the province address and phone number already on it or click on a link that will send an email to the province or some other way for the person to make instant contact.

A third issue in step 3 is the use of a development company, firm or corporation. These are called development professionals. Such

development professionals can direct the message to appropriate resources. From steps 1 and 2, these professionals are trained to envision needed resources. This envisioning can also help in concretizing what resources are needed now and in the future. Also, development professionals study where resources are and what it takes to access them for us.

Many times development professionals will find resources that are within the province. Every area of the world has resources. Populations with overwhelming numbers of economically poor also have a group of economically wealthy. The development professional works to answer the question: "Who does the province know that has a relation to this wealthy group?"

Development professionals can also look at philanthropy by governments and corporations in any area of the world. Most governments are realizing that they have a responsibility to help their poor. Corporations now know that their philanthropy is a tool that can increase their business. International corporations can sometimes be a resource to a province if the corporation can see a benefit not only to them but to the people surrounding them. Development professionals can craft such a vision.

In conclusion, it is important to recall that our charism implies that we ask everyone to join us. St. Vincent never failed to approach either the poor country woman or the royalty of his day and ask them to help.

Today, it is up to us to declare the goodness of the poor and invite others. The province must want to ask others to join in their ministry and not wait to be approached by donors. The province must want to do development.

God moves the respondent to answer. Our responsibility is to "put the lamp on the mountain" and ask others to join us at the top. God will take care of the rest.

Summary of the Province and Development

A province implicitly does development when it organizes and activates its ministries and asks others to help.

1. Vincentian development is to write or put forth a consistent and compelling case or plan for a province's activities that is open to others working with them (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres' work with the poor and priestly formation.
2. Development needs the province to focus its ministries and declare what it spends its resources on. Development can

- show others these goals and results and solicit them to join.
3. Development needs the province to define and describe the need and the poor. If possible, the description and definition should include why the province thinks these “poor” are a priority as opposed to other types of poor.
 4. Development uses details of the ministry of step two to attract donors. Development can detail the shape of the ministry, how it is organized and the probability of success in the ministry.
 5. The particular thrust or distinction that makes the ministry separate from others is what development needs to declare and invite others to the ministry.
 6. For development, the word “Vincentian” means that every aspect of the ministry will be imbued with the preferential option for the poor.
 7. The work (or formality) of the third step is putting down in words, stories and pictures steps one and two — the ministries and the province’s focus. Techniques such as videos, magazines, websites, etc. are all tools that invite others to “come and see.”
 8. Development professionals can help the province define what group of people that they will ask to join them and then direct the message to potential groups of interest who have resources.
 9. Development makes it easier for the donor to respond.
 10. For successful development, the province must want to ask others to join in their ministry. God moves the respondent to answer.

April 2007

IV. Current Activities of the International Office of Development

Oral Presentation by Rev. Carl Leo Pieber, C.M.,
International Meeting of Visitors
Mexico City, June 3 to June 16, 2007

The International Office of Development was established for two reasons. First, there was a need for more resources beyond what the provinces provide to the International Congregation, especially for poorer provinces. Some of these needs on the international level are provincial endowments, support of new missions, support of future provinces, assistance to the Vincentian Family branches, especially those which have the Superior General as their Director

General, care of Vincentian historical places and worldwide projects for the poor.

The second issue was the thrust of the charism of St. Vincent to invite others throughout the world to help the poor. Development is a type of evangelization of people. It is bringing the needs of one people and nation to a different people and nation and asking for help.

Development necessitates preparation. To ask for resources and gifts demands that you have something to ask for, be able to describe it and show what the outcome will be. The time it takes to gather this information on an international level is longer than on the provincial or local levels. The information must then be translated to a different culture that can help. Development offices on such a large scale take several years to become effective. Starting the International Office of Development now is a planning step directed more to future funding than current needs.

The International Office of Development was established to serve the Superior General and his Council by seeking cash, resources and funds including endowments, bequests and annuities, for needs of the International Congregation as specified by them. Though in its infancy, the Office has two major projects.

Using the discussion elaborated in "Provinces and Development," the Office has begun work on establishing a Patrimonial Fund for seven provinces. The Office is gathering information on the ministries of these provinces to formulate a consistent and compelling case or plan for the International Congregation that is open to others working with it (either actively or through gifts) to achieve positive results in the confreres' work with the poor and priestly formation.

With this case, the Office will then be able to identify constituencies that can aid these provinces. From this research, the Office will formulate a plan with needed materials and technologies and begin solicitation for the patrimonial fund. The financial goal for this fund is \$7 million.

A second and intimately related project is to seek \$2.5 million to support MISEVI, AMM and JMV. These Vincentian Family members have a direct relation to the Superior General and annually receive support from him. Again, the Office is gathering information to establish a case for support, identify resources and begin solicitation for the money.

Another member of the Congregation has offered to work closely with the Office in obtaining this money. Through both of their efforts, his and the office, they hope to complete this work within

several years. The ability to succeed in this project and the other future needs of the International Congregation depends on support of all of the provinces.

This support of the provinces can concretely start with you today. I must appeal to you who already know the needs of the Congregation. I am sure that you know donors who want to give to the mission and support of the International Congregation of the Mission.

There is a working principle that is proven true, time and again. The principle is this: Every donor gives to what that donor likes and wants to give to. No matter what charity asks the donor, if it is not their primary charity, the donor will give little or nothing to that charity. If the donors want to support education of children, they will give little to the homeless, unless it is for the education of a homeless child.

As provincials, you may know some people who are interested in helping the world. These donors want to give to international causes. They have a desire to reach out beyond the borders of their country.

IF you know of some one like this or some group that could help the International Congregation, would you please let me know? To do this, just give me your name. Send me an email — my address is below. I will contact you and arrange a convenient time when we can discuss the group or person. I promise you that I will do nothing with or to this donor without your knowledge. So, who do you know that can join us in helping the poor worldwide?

In conclusion, I thank you for your kindness and attention to this brief presentation. Should you want any further information please contact me. Thank you.

While this issue of *Vincentiana* was in printing, the International Office of Development was merged with the Vincentian Solidarity Office.

E.N.

Commission for Promoting Systemic Change

by Robert Paul Maloney, C.M.

In 2006, with the encouragement and financial support of a foundation, the Superior General named a Commission for Promoting Systemic Change. Its members are Norberto Carcellar, C.M.; Ellen Flynn, D.C.; Joseph Foley, C.M.; Robert Maloney, C.M.; Patricia Nava, A.I.C.; Pedro Opeka, C.M. and Gene Smith, S.S.V.P. Fr. Greg gave the commission the following mandate: “To help bring about systemic change through the apostolates of the members of the Vincentian family, especially those ministering to the oppressed poor.” Toward that end, the members of the Commission were asked to study available materials concerning systemic change, to discuss their own involvement in it, to formulate a list of effective strategies for helping the poor emerge from poverty, and subsequently to share the list with the members of the Vincentian Family. The Commission was also asked to propose how these strategies might best be disseminated; e.g., *a*) a book might be published in various languages and be distributed among the members of the Vincentian Family throughout the world for use in ongoing-education programs; *b*) the members of the Commission themselves or others might give seminars on the notion of systemic change and the strategies for bringing it about.

The Commission has now met three times. In its discussions, it has placed particular emphasis on self-help and self-sustaining programs, so that the poor will be active participants in the planning and realization of the projects envisioned. At present, the Commission is moving ahead in the preparation of a book on systemic change called *Seeds of Hope: Stories of Systemic Change*. The book will narrate the “stories” of several projects that have had success in this regard. It will also include a chapter on the spirituality that undergirds systemic change projects, as well as a chapter that will propose a series of best practices, or what the Commission prefers to call “effective strategies flowing from our experience and our Vincentian tradition.” In addition, the Commission has decided to produce a kit to accompany the book or to be used independent of

it. The kit will contain a series of practical materials to assist people who are interested in systemic change; for example, a DVD with videos about some of the stories told in the book, a series of pamphlets on the key questions to be examined in starting a project, a tool for evaluating projects, suggestions about fundraising, and a list of best practices or effective strategies. The Commission has also been asked, eventually, to recommend ways of promoting good money management in the works of the Vincentian Family and among the poor it serves, with a special view toward addressing the root causes of poverty.

Fr. Greg invited the members of the Commission to make a presentation to the International Heads of the various branches of the Vincentian Family at their meeting in Rome on February 2-4, 2007. At that meeting, the Commission spoke of the nature of systemic change, the spirituality that underlies it, and the strategies that foster it. They described projects in Madagascar, the Philippines, England, the Dominican Republic, and other places in which our Family is succeeding not only in serving the immediate needs of the poor, but also in assisting the poor to develop strategies by which they can emerge from poverty. Convinced that there are other projects like these that already exist within the Family, the Commission asked the heads of the family to share the stories of such works. A lively discussion followed. At the end of that discussion, the heads of the various branches of the Family decided to choose systemic change as the Family's focus for at least the next two years, beginning on September 27th, 2007. The Commission will produce a study guide, consisting of five sessions, to help in that process.

Fr. Greg also asked the Commission to assist the members of the General Council in formulating criteria for the annual systemic change award. The criteria formulated are the following:

1. *Involve the poor themselves, including the young and women, at all stages: the identification of needs, planning, implementation, evaluation and revision.*
2. *Have a holistic vision — addressing a series of basic human needs: individual and social, spiritual and physical, especially needs like jobs, health care, housing, education, and spiritual growth.*
3. *Place particular emphasis on self-help and self-sustaining programs that have a special view toward addressing the root causes of poverty.*
4. *Foster transparency, inviting participation in preparing budgets and in commenting on financial reports, while promoting good*

money management and maintaining careful controls over the use of assets.

5. *Construct a shared vision with diverse stakeholders: poor communities, interested individuals, donors, churches, governments, NGOs, the private sector, unions, the media, international organizations and networks, etc.*

Since the Commission has already received a number of invitations to speak about systemic change at the ongoing formation programs of the various branches of the Vincentian Family, it has prepared a workshop for use on those occasions.

The concept of “systemic change” is a modern one. It was unknown in St. Vincent’s time, though St. Vincent himself expressed many related ideas. When he gathered the first group of women to form a “Confraternity of Charity” at Chatillon-les-Dombes in November 1617, he stated, in the Rule he composed for them (SV XIII, 423), that the poor sometimes suffer more from lack of “order” than from lack of persons willing to do charitable works. He continually urged the members of the Family to love the poor “spiritually and corporally” and “affectively and effectively.” He encouraged his followers to examine various elements in the lives of the poor to see what their most important needs were: nourishment, health care, education, work, spiritual care.... Today we are conscious that the poor live within a social system where some or many of those elements are lacking, a system that, if changed, can help a person emerge from poverty. The Commission is focusing on assisting others to design projects which help the poor change the social system within which they live.

Systemic Change

The Theme of the Vincentian Family for the Upcoming Two Years

by Patricia Nava, A.I.C.

and Robert Paul Maloney, C.M.

In an address given in 1979, Pope John Paul II stated: “Social thinking and social practice inspired by the Gospel must always be marked by a special sensitivity towards those who are most in distress, those who are extremely poor, those suffering... from hunger, neglect, unemployment and despair. You will also want to seek out the structural reasons which foster or cause the different forms of poverty in the world and in your own country, so that you can apply the appropriate remedies.”

Structural thinking does not come easily to us. It requires an informed understanding of the real circumstances of the poor, patience analysis, and a disciplined search for solutions. Beyond that, structural change demands dialogue, collaborative action, and perseverance. But without structural thinking and structural change, the root causes of poverty remain embedded in society, even if programs that we set up are successful in dealing with some symptoms.

With that in mind, in recent years the Vincentian Family has been focusing more often on systemic change. Of course, in a Family like ours, providing immediate service and working for systemic change are not an “either/or” option. They are a “both/and” imperative. It is important for us, on the one hand, to work to meet the immediate needs of the poor. On the other hand, it is crucial that we also help in promoting long-term change. Over the last two years some important steps forward have been made in that regard.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2006, with the encouragement and support of a foundation, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Fr. Gregory Gay, named a Commission for Promoting Systemic Change and gave it the following mandate: *To help bring about systemic change through*

the apostolates of the members of the Vincentian Family, especially those ministering to the oppressed poor.

The members of the Commission are: Sr. Ellen Flynn, D.C., director of The Passage, a multi-faceted program for helping to rehabilitate homeless people in London; Fr. Norberto Carcellar, C.M., the founder of the Philippine Province's work at Payatas and subsequent housing and micro-lending projects in Manila and elsewhere; Fr. Pedro Opeka, C.M., founder and director of Akamasoa ("good friends") and of the construction of 17 villages for those formerly living in a garbage dump in Madagascar; Fr. Robert Maloney, C.M., coordinator of the collaborative work of the Community of Sant'Egidio and the Daughters of Charity in DREAM, a project for combating AIDS, especially in Africa; Fr. Joseph Foley, C.M., NGO representative of the Congregation of the Mission at the United Nations; Mrs. Patricia Nava (AIC), Representative of AIC for relationships with the international Vincentian Family; and Mr. Gene Smith (SSVP), Executive Director of Seton Institute in Daly City, California.

Each year at their annual meeting, the heads of various branches of the Vincentian Family choose a common theme for reflection and action for the year ahead. The theme is launched on September 27th, at the annual Family Day of Prayer. In 2006, the Family's reflection revolved around **creativity**. The main challenge was to bring to life Saint Vincent's words: "*Love is inventive even to infinity.*"

This year the heads of the Family, gathered in Rome, invited the members of the Commission for Promoting Systemic Change to make a presentation. Afterwards, "Systemic Change" was chosen as the Family's focus for at least the coming two years (2007-2009).

II. THE GOALS OF THE COMMISSION AND THE WORK DONE SO FAR

1. Goals

When the General Council named the members of the Commission, it asked the members:

- To study available material concerning Systemic Change,
- To discuss the members' own involvement in Systemic Change,
- To formulate a series of "best practice" recommendations (effective strategies) which will subsequently be shared with the members of the Vincentian Family,
- To propose how the effective strategies might best be disseminated among the members of the Family throughout the world.

2. What has been done so far

To respond to its mandate, the Commission started to reflect about Systemic Change and how to share the results of its work. At the beginning of the process, each of the members of the Commission wrote a story based on his or her own experience, describing a work in which Systemic Change has been implemented. In each one of the stories presented, The Commission identified some strategies that might be used in working toward Systemic Change in projects among the poor. Particular emphasis was placed on self-help and self-sustaining programs, so that the poor themselves are active participants in the planning and realization of the projects envisioned. The Commission stressed the spirituality that lies behind a systemic-change approach in the Vincentian Family.

At the same time the Commission has been working on various ways to communicate the work it is doing:

- A book, entitled *Seeds of Hope: Stories of Systemic Change*, that will be published in various languages and distributed throughout the world,
- A Tool kit containing brochures, short documents, DVDs, suggestions for workshops, etc.,
- A special issue of *Vincentiana* or other periodicals,
- Courses, seminars and workshops for leaders and multiplying agents,
- Proposals for promoting good money management within our Family and among the poor we serve, with a special view toward addressing the root causes of poverty.

III. SYSTEMIC CHANGE APPROACH

A. *Some clarifications about the notion of Systemic Change*

Systemic Change aims not only to serve the immediate needs of the poor (by providing food, clothing, etc.), but also to assist the poor to develop effective strategies by which they can emerge from poverty. The notion of “systemic change” should not be confused with “systematic change” (that is, planned, step-by-step change); “systematic change” can have very positive effectives, but “systemic change” goes further. It aims at changing a whole complex of structures that form a social system within which we live.

A system functions as a whole through the interaction of its various parts. Its elements affect each other constantly as they interact, either for better or for worse. Unemployment or low wages, poor housing, an unhealthy diet, deficient healthcare, and low-quality

education are usually not separate problems; rather, they are often intimately linked with one another. “Systemic change” aims at transforming an entire series of interacting elements, rather than just some of them. This requires changing attitudes that cause the problems we hope to solve. A systemic-change approach offers tools to interpret our experience and focuses on how the system’s elements interact. It devises means for promoting structural change within a whole system. Basically, systemic-change thinking helps us, in the words attributed to Albert Einstein, **“to learn to see the world anew”**.

EXAMPLE:

We can illustrate this process with **“The Perfect Storm,”** one of the stories on Systemic Change proposed by Gene Smith, from the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in the USA. Gene relates what happened in San José de Ocoa. The project there began by focusing on water, but gradually it came to encompass many other elements in the life of the community. Gene tells the story as follows:

*Systemic change occurred in this community when, thanks to a visionary leader, a number of positive elements intersected, resulting in a transformed community. A **“Perfect Storm”** of joined efforts and events transformed the lives of many poor people.*

*Traditionally, twinning in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul involves aid sent from one Conference to another, enabling the members in poor countries to give direct assistance to some of the most needy. Jack, the leader, came up with the creative idea of **“cluster twinning”** whereby large numbers of conferences and councils in the United States would send twinning support to an irrigation project through the San Jose de Ocoa Conference and, subsequently through other new conferences in the Dominican Republic.*

In no time, large sums were sent for needed equipment to build aqueducts and buy pipes. Work brigades of people from many villages were formed. When Jack returned to Ocoa, after two years, he could not believe what he saw. Everything was green and the water system had spread. He saw one village helping another, and so on. There was a holistic effect.

The excellent work led to many spin off projects:

- *Aqueduct and irrigation work,*
- *water purification plants,*
- *provision of private/shared potable water,*
- *replacement of roof and dirt floors,*

- *creation of home gardens for greater nutrition,*
- *farming cooperatives,*
- *latrines for sanitation,*
- *home building.*

Now water flows to more than a hundred villages. By bringing water to the villages, nutrition and health improved, opportunities for work resulted and the communities grew closer.

B. The spirituality that lies behind Systemic Change

The concept of “systemic change” is a contemporary one. It was unknown in St. Vincent’s time, though St. Vincent himself expressed many related ideas. When he gathered the first group of women to form a “Confraternity of Charity” at Chatillon-les-Dombes in November 1617, he stated, in the Rule he composed for them (SV XIII, 423), that the poor sometimes suffer more from lack of “order” than from lack of charitable persons. He continually urged the members of his Family to love the poor “spiritually and corporally” and “affectively and effectively.” He encouraged his followers to examine various elements in the lives of the poor to see what their most important needs were: nourishment, health care, education, work, spiritual care, etc. Today we are conscious that the poor live within a social system where some or many of these elements are lacking, a system that, if changed, can help a person emerge from poverty.

There are three key phrases in the Vincentian tradition, that today are moving us more and more, in our various branches, not only to assist the poor in their immediate needs by providing food, clothing and shelter, but also to assist them to change the social system within which they live, so that they might emerge from poverty.

The first phrase is that our love is to be both “***affective and effective.***”¹ St. Vincent repeated this theme over and over again. He says, for example, “*The love of a Daughter of Charity is not only tender; it is effective, because they serve the poor concretely.*”²

The second phrase is that we minister to the poor “***spiritually and corporally.***”³ St. Vincent uses this phrase in speaking to all the groups he founded: the Confraternities of Charity, the Congregation of the Mission, and the Daughters of Charity. He tells the Daughters of Charity that they should tend not only to bodily needs, but also share their faith by their witness and their words. Conversely, he

¹ SV IX, 475, 592, 599; XI, 40.

² SV IX, 593.

³ SV IX, 59, 593; XI, 364.

warns the members of the Congregation of the Mission that they should not think of their mission in exclusively spiritual terms.⁴ Rather, they too should care for the sick, the foundlings, the insane, even the most abandoned.⁵

The third phrase is that we are to proclaim the good news *“by word and work.”* St. Vincent was deeply convinced that what we say and what we do must reinforce one another. First, do. Then, teach. That is St. Vincent’s rule for **“effective” evangelization**. In other words, he sees preaching, teaching and human promotion as complementary to one another, and as integral to the evangelization process. Today, the unity between evangelization and human promotion, so much a part of St. Vincent’s spirit, is one of the main emphases in the Church’s social teaching.⁶

In light of these three phrases, so fundamental in our family’s spirituality, the Commission is attempting to respond concretely to the appeal that Pope John Paul II addressed to the General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission in 1986: *“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.”*

C. Effective strategies and Stories about Systemic Change

The Commission has spent a significant amount of time identifying the strategies that bring about effective systemic change. It considers these strategies to be very important, if not indispensable, for producing long-range results in the lives of the poor.

In order that they might be examined more carefully, the strategies have been divided into four categories: mission-oriented strategies, task-oriented strategies, people-oriented strategies, and strategies oriented toward co-responsibility, networking and political action.

Along with each group of strategies presented below, a systemic-change story is offered as an illustration.

⁴ SV XII, 87: “If there are any among us who think they are in the Congregation of the Mission to preach the gospel to the poor but not to comfort them and have them assisted in every way, by ourselves and by others.... To do this is to preach the gospel by words and by works....”

⁵ SV XI, 393.

⁶ Cf. Synod of Bishops, 1971, *Justice in the World*, in AAS LXIII (1971) 924: “... action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world are integral elements in the preaching of the gospel.” Cf. also, *Centesimus Annus*, 5.

Mission-oriented strategies (motivation and direction)

- ⇒ Consider poverty not as the inevitable result of circumstances, but as the product of unjust situations that can be changed, focusing on actions that will break the circle of poverty,
- ⇒ Design projects, creative strategies, policies and guidelines that flow from our Christian and Vincentian values and mission,
- ⇒ Evangelize and inculcate Christian and Vincentian values and our charism, by maintaining a profound respect for the local culture.

EXAMPLE:***Akamasoa, “City of the Good Friends”***

This project brings together several strategies for systemic change, while focusing on fidelity to the Vincentian mission. The story takes place outside Tananarive, the capital of Madagascar. The poverty of those who live in a garbage dump there is a scandal that runs contrary to human dignity.

When Fr. Pedro Opeka, C.M., first arrived in Madagascar, he could not believe the misery around him. He asked himself: “What is there to do for the hundreds of families that live in outrageous conditions in the midst of the garbage?” He started searching for a solution with some members of the community. They discerned that working in the quarry might be a good departing point.

Soon they started excavating boulders for construction. The work of the women was very important at this stage, and has continued to be so. With the money they obtained, the workers bought rice and building tools, and gradually they were able to begin building their own lodgings.

Today, those first settlements have become real urban communities, with all sorts of services. On Sundays, five or six thousand persons congregate for praising the Lord for all they have received.

*None of this could have been possible without strong individual, family, and societal discipline, grounded in personal responsibility and a firm belief in Providence. As Akamasoa has become known around the world, the project has expanded into **seventeen towns**, thanks to the work of the people, the guidance and support of their leader, Fr. Pedro, and the generous help of the Congregation of the Mission, other organizations, and individuals.*

Task-oriented Strategies (organization)

- ⇒ Start with a serious analysis of the local reality, flowing from concrete data, and tailor all projects to this reality,
- ⇒ Have a holistic vision, addressing a series of basic human needs — individual and social, spiritual and physical, especially jobs, health care, housing, education, spiritual growth — with an integral approach toward prevention and sustainable development,
- ⇒ Implement coherent strategies, starting modestly, delegating tasks and responsibilities, and providing quality services respectful of human dignity,
- ⇒ Systematize, institutionalize and evaluate the project and its procedures, describing measurable indicators and results,
- ⇒ Make the project self-sustaining by guaranteeing that it will have the human and economic resources needed for it to last,
- ⇒ Be transparent, inviting participation in preparing budgets and in commenting on financial reports. Maintain careful controls over money management.

EXAMPLE:

Homeless People's Federation Philippines

When this project started, several branches of the Vincentian Family — the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, AIC, SSVP, and the Vincentian Marian Youth — started working together in Payatas, in the slums of Manila.

After a serious analysis of the local reality, they started a holistic project, intended to satisfy the primary needs of the people working in this enormous garbage dump in the capital.

The central element that glued the whole community together was a savings program that functioned 24 hours a day, coordinated by Fr. Norberto Carcellar, C.M.

A whole ongoing formation process was started in order to empower the poor themselves, so that they became the main agents of their own development. From a simple savings and loan program in Payatas, the work of the Homeless People's Federation Philippines (HPFP) has evolved, mobilizing urban informal settlers and slum dwellers around shelter and land tenure issues. In case of natural disasters, the Federation offers help and support to the members and to the poorest of the poor.

As its work has grown, the HPFP has found ready partners and collaborators among various institutional stakeholders; namely, professionals, academicians, local governments, national agen-

cies, international organizations, and multi-lateral institutions. Gradually, a broader system of support is evolving, a social system made up of networks of communities implementing strategies to manage community resources.

People-oriented Strategies (focusing on the poor as the persons who are most capable of changing their own situation)

- ⇒ Listen carefully and seek to understand the needs and aspirations of the poor, creating an atmosphere of respect and mutual confidence and fostering self-esteem among the people,
- ⇒ Involve the poor themselves, including the young and women, at all stages: identification of needs, planning, implementation, evaluation and revision,
- ⇒ Educate, train, and offer spiritual formation to all participants in the project,
- ⇒ Promote learning processes in which the members of the group, especially the poor themselves, speak with one another about their successes and failures, share their insights and talents, and work toward forming effective multiplying agents and visionary leaders in the local community, servant-leaders inspired by St. Vincent de Paul,
- ⇒ Construct structural and institutional models, where communities can identify their resources and needs, make informed decisions, and exchange information and effective strategies within the community and among various communities,
- ⇒ Promote engagement in political processes, through civic education of individuals and communities,
- ⇒ Support and respect the mechanisms for promoting solidarity that exist among the community members.

EXAMPLE:

I have a D.R.E.A.M.

Since 2002, Project DREAM has been applying in Africa, with extraordinary success, the standards of treatment now used in developed countries. Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) chose it as a case study for treating AIDS. In 2004, the Daughters of Charity and the Community of Saint Egidio asked Fr. Robert Maloney, C.M., to be the coordinator of their joint labors in this project.

Giving particular attention to the sufferings of sick persons, DREAM provides high-quality drug treatment, called triple therapy, to children and adults who are HIV-positive. Its special

focus is to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from a mother to her new-born child and to maintain the ongoing health of the mother. 98% of the children born with the program are completely HIV-free. Almost all their mothers are still alive.

When Ana Maria first arrived to participate in DREAM she weighed a skeletal 64 pounds. Upon discovering that she was HIV positive, her husband had left her and her neighbors isolated her. As she struggled to take care of her six children she realized that she was dying. She said that the stigma was killing her as much as the disease. Today she and her children are well. Treatment helped her so much that, as her medication was phased down, her immune system became almost normal. In fact, Ana Maria is filled with fighting talk and enthusiasm as she promotes the struggle against AIDS actively, fuelled by her awareness that she would be dead if she had not received treatment.

Joãozinho has become a symbol of DREAM and one of its most loved patients. He was the 1000th baby born to HIV-positive women receiving treatment. Like other children born in DREAM before and since, he now has the chance to lead a healthy life. Joãozinho has great reason to rejoice as he faces the future: his mother is alive and healthy and will take care of him in the years to come.

DREAM takes a holistic approach, addressing a series of basic human needs: especially health care, nutrition, and education. The project has now spread into ten African countries, with others on the waiting list.

Strategies oriented toward co-responsibility, networking and political action (participation and solidarity)

- ⇒ Promote social co-responsibility and networking, sensitizing society at all levels — local, national and international — about changing the unjust conditions that affect the lives of the poor,
- ⇒ Construct a shared vision with diverse stakeholders: (poor communities, interested individuals, donors, churches, governments, the private sector, unions, the media, international organizations and networks, etc.),
- ⇒ Struggle to transform unjust situations and to have a positive impact, through political action, on public policy and laws,
- ⇒ Have a prophetic attitude: announce, denounce, and, by networking with others, engage in actions that exert pressure for bringing about change.

EXAMPLE:***AIC-Madagascar. To be transformed in order to transform***

AIC in Madagascar, a country towards which Vincent de Paul channeled great efforts, keeps his charism alive to this day. Recently, this association changed from a few unrelated, disarticulated groups into an important national network, part of the international AIC.

At present there are thirteen groups, whose members are all poor women who work very hard to alleviate the poverty of their families and of their communities. Networking is one of the association's guidelines. This has allowed it to reach goals that could have not been achieved otherwise.

*Madagascar's internal network **links with other networks**, above all with the members of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, who participated in the founding and ongoing development of the association in the country.*

The internal network also collaborates with and receives support from international organizations like UNICEF and other groups, which help through subsidies, didactic materials and food.

AIC-Madagascar has been recognized by UNICEF as a privileged partner, and Madagascar's volunteers have been invited to speak at various international meetings where they have shared their experience in assisting children. Their nutritional projects have been selected as pilot projects that serve as an example for others.

Decision-makers have listened carefully to their recommendations in regard to the nutrition of children, maternal care, prevention of violence, and responsible paternity.

The capacity to listen, ongoing formation, empowerment, political action and networking lie at the basis of the volunteers' work in Madagascar. Their projects show their clear commitment to a global effort to eradicate poverty.



This article has provided just a short introduction to the theme of Systemic Change, along with a few brief descriptions of systemic-change projects. Much more could be said about each of the examples presented. Moreover, many other similar projects surely exist within the Family. The Commission for Promoting Systemic Change would welcome news about them. By sharing that news, the branches will encourage each other in working toward long-range solutions in assisting the poor.

This is the prayer that the Commission has formulated for the Vincentian Family as it begins to focus more intensely on the theme of Systemic Change:

We praise and thank you, O God, Creator of the universe.

You have made all things good and have given us the earth to cultivate.

Grant that we may always use created things gratefully, and share them generously with those in need.

Give us creativity in helping the poor meet their basic human needs.

Open our minds and hearts so that we might stand at their side and assist them to change whatever unjust structures keep them poor.

Enable us to be brothers and sisters to them, friends who walk with them in their struggle for fundamental human rights.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

Amen

I Have a D.R.E.A.M.*

by Robert Paul Maloney, C.M.

When Ana Maria first arrived to participate in DREAM she weighed a skeletal 64 pounds. Upon discovering that she was HIV positive, her husband had left her and her neighbors isolated her. As she struggled to take care of her six children she realized that she was dying. She felt that the stigma was killing her as much as the disease. Today she and her children are well. In fact, Ana Maria is filled with fighting talk and enthusiasm as she promotes the struggle against AIDS, fuelled by her awareness that she would be dead if she had not received treatment.



* D.R.E.A.M.: Drug Enhancement Against AIDS and Malnutrition.

THE GRIM REALITY OF AIDS IN THE WORLD

Today, with early diagnosis, proper care and well-monitored drug therapy, a person who is HIV-positive can live a relatively normal life; in the USA and Western Europe most do. But in poorer countries, most die, since few receive high-quality treatment. Worldwide, AIDS killed 2.9 million people in 2006, and the total number of people living with HIV reached its highest level in history, an estimated 39.5 million people. In 2006, 4.3 million new cases emerged; about 530,000 of these were among children under the age of 15. While the number of deaths from AIDS in the USA and Western Europe has diminished dramatically because of drug therapy, it remains the leading cause of death worldwide for people between the ages of 15 and 49.

THE REALITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Africa is hardest-hit. There, 24.7 million people have HIV/AIDS. Last year there were 2.8 million new cases in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, almost two thirds of all those in the world with HIV live there, as do 77% of all women with HIV. The World Health Organization estimates that 95% of those with the virus do not know they have it. Except for India (with 5,700,000 victims), South Africa has the highest number of people (5,500,000) of any country in the world with HIV/AIDS. Swaziland has the highest adult prevalence rate in the world, 33%.

One of the most striking demographic impacts of HIV/AIDS is its effect on life expectancy; the steady gains made in many countries during the last century have been reversed. Already, life expectancy for women in six highly-affected countries has dropped to below 40 years. Today, a woman born in the USA can expect to live to 80; a woman born in Swaziland can expect to live to 32.9. A woman born in Japan can expect to live to 85.4; a woman born in Zimbabwe can expect to live to 36.5. Last year 2.1 million people died of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

THE GENESIS OF AN APPROACH

As the third millennium was dawning, the Community of Sant'Egidio, many of whose members are health-care professionals, began to reflect on a glaring injustice in the global social structure: the majority of those with AIDS in Western Europe and the USA

were no longer dying because they received “triple-therapy,” whereas millions of AIDS victims in Africa continued to die each year.

This lay community, founded in 1968 in Rome and recognized canonically by the Catholic Church, has a special bond with Mozambique. The relationship began in the early 1980’s when Sant’Egidio sent humanitarian aid to Mozambique during the country’s long, devastating civil war; it reached a high point when the community mediated the peace agreement signed in Rome on October 4, 1992 after 27 months of negotiations. After communal reflection on the AIDS crisis in Africa, the Community formulated this priority: it would offer the same treatment, and the same hope, to patients in Africa as was available to victims in Western Europe and the USA. Consequently, the Community designed DREAM and began a pilot project in Mozambique in March 2002.

DREAM

The acronym DREAM signifies “Drug Resource Enhancement against AIDS and Malnutrition”. Since 2002, Project DREAM has been applying in Africa, with extraordinary success, the state-of-the-art standards of treatment now used in developed countries. Recently the World Health Organization (WHO) chose it as a case study for treating AIDS.

DREAM provides treatment to children and adults who are HIV-positive, but its special focus is to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from a pregnant woman to her new-born child and to maintain the on-going health of the mother. The method used is highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART), which is sometimes called the “triple therapy” because of the three drugs administered. DREAM’s success rate is very high: 98% of children born to HIV-infected mothers taking part in the project are born HIV-free. The ongoing results are carefully monitored daily through a computer hookup between Mozambique and Rome, so that DREAM, in addition to being a treatment program, does ongoing research aimed at improving patient-care.

Accurate diagnosis plays a crucial role in DREAM. For that reason, a molecular biology laboratory is essential for analyzing the patients’ situation, monitoring their therapy and counteracting any toxic effects that it might have.

DREAM has been creative in inventing means for keeping the adherence-rate of participants high. Its goal, 95% adherence, has now been met, so that DREAM’s rate of adherence in sub-Saharan

Africa is equal to or higher than the overall rate in the USA and Western Europe. The principal incentive, of course, is the success of the therapy itself. Other means are home visits, a day hospital, a mother/child healthcare center, and a day-care program to which pregnant women bring their children, thus guaranteeing their presence twice a day for medication, at drop-off and pick-up times.

Hunger and mal-nutrition weaken the defenses of patients and increase the likelihood of their dying; in Mozambique, for example, about 14% of infants have a below-average weight at birth. So DREAM also monitors patients' nutritional state, devotes time to health education, promotes a balanced diet, and, with the help of the World Food Program and other NGOs, provides for food distribution to mothers and their families.

DREAM works in partnership with the host nations, though its funding does not pass through local governments, and it focuses on capacity-building within local communities and the training of indigenous personnel, so that eventually they can take over the running of the program. In each country an agreement is signed with the Ministry of Health to assure the government's cooperation and support for DREAM.



THE PARTNERS

In June 2005, the Community of Sant'Egidio entered into a cooperative agreement with the Daughters of Charity, one of the world's largest communities of sisters, founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1633 to serve the sick poor. At present the Daughters labor in 21 African countries and have numerous native-born sisters there. They staff hospitals and clinics in most of the 93 countries where they serve throughout the world and have well-trained personnel.

With the birth of this new agreement, the Mother General of the Daughters of Charity appointed a "DREAM Team," whose members are Sr. Catherine Mulligan and Sr. Jacqueline Gbanga. They represent the Mother General at the many meetings involved in launching DREAM in various countries. At the request of both the Daughters of Charity and the Community of Sant'Egidio, Fr. Robert Maloney serves as coordinator for the joint programs in which the two communities, and sometimes other groups, collaborate. His role is basically one of facilitation, assisting the various parties to work together smoothly. He also helps in making contacts with others who might be interested in collaborating in DREAM.

The advantages of cooperation between Sant'Egidio and the Daughters are significant. Sant'Egidio provides the DREAM model for AIDS treatment, as well as formation and evaluation in the use of that model. The Daughters provide personnel, their experience in health care, their native contacts within various countries, and, perhaps most important, the assurance that the resources of the program will reach the poorest of the poor directly. The joint participation of these two communities guarantees that costs are kept low while quality is kept high. The program is totally free of cost for those receiving treatment.

Sant'Egidio and the Daughters are already collaborating in Nigeria, the Congo, Cameroon, and Kenya, in addition to Mozambique. The two communities look forward, over the next few years, to initiating further joint projects in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, and Madagascar. Meanwhile, Sant'Egidio is collaborating with other groups in other countries: Tanzania, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, and Angola. As DREAM expands to new sites, its results are evaluated regularly, so that Sant'Egidio and the Daughters can improve the quality of the program as it is established in other places.

DREAM's trained staff members have now seen more than 44,000 patients. They have accompanied 4,000 women throughout their pregnancy and for years afterwards. Almost all these mothers are still alive, and almost all their children have been born HIV-free. Among



DREAM's ongoing patients are over 1600 children. This is one of the largest groups of children receiving anti-retroviral therapy anywhere in the world.

Since the Daughters of Charity also have significant personnel resources in 18 countries in Asia, they “dream” of establishing DREAM there too. The Daughters have a large number of sisters in Vietnam, India, the Philippines, and Indonesia and have well-established communities in continental China and Thailand.

In mid-December 2005, the Daughters and Sant'Egidio entered into a new collaborative relationship with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which, through a consortium of partners called AIDSRelief, is now providing anti-retroviral therapy in nine countries under a grant from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The first country to benefit from this new partnership is Nigeria, where in May 2006 a DREAM Center for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission opened in Abuja at a hospital of the Daughters. From there, in 2007, a network of centers, located at hospitals and clinics which the Daughters staff, will extend outward into various parts of the country.

Unfortunately, two of the countries where DREAM Centers are at present under construction, the Congo and Cameroon, are not eligible for PEPFAR funds, since they are not in the list of the US government's focus countries.

Construction of a new center is about to begin in Nairobi, Kenya, too.

FORMATION

In preparation for these collaborative projects, the Community of Sant'Egidio has, over the last few years, sponsored ten three-week-long formation programs in Mozambique, Malawi, and Tanzania; 2500 participants from 20 countries have taken part. The courses target various groups: doctors, nurses, team coordinators, lab personnel, social workers, computer technicians, and home visitors, offering them specialized modules, providing practical experience in DREAM centers, and processing that experience in group sessions. Teachers aim to communicate to participants not only the most up-to-date scientific knowledge about AIDS, but also the principles underlying the DREAM model.

FALL-OUT FROM AIDS

One of the most tragic effects of AIDS is the huge number of orphans and vulnerable children. More than 15 million children under the age of 17 have lost one or both parents to the disease. UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program for combating the pandemic, estimates that by 2010 there will be 42 million orphans in Africa. That surpasses the total number of children in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Holland! It also exceeds the number of children in the United States living east of the Mississippi River! These children, with the death of their parents, face the loss of family income, the burden of caring for younger siblings, and withdrawal from school in order to provide for family members. They run a significantly greater risk of malnutrition, physical abuse, sexual exploitation, preventable illnesses and HIV infection. As DREAM seeks to counteract AIDS, the Daughters of Charity, the Community of Sant'Egidio, and CRS attempt to provide for the vulnerable children left in its wake.

Another tragic effect is the feminization of AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa, most young people living with HIV/AIDS are girls. 59% of all adults living with HIV/AIDS are women. Teens and young adults are at the center of the epidemic. In some countries the feminization of

HIV/AIDS is dramatic. In Guinea, more than 2/3 of the adults (68%) living with HIV/AIDS are women.

A third effect is the loss of leaders and professional people in the next generation: teachers, doctors, nurses, and many others who could have helped to transform the life of poor African countries will not be there, as millions and millions of adults and children die. So, it is highly probable that the poorest countries will remain the poorest because they lack the human resources to create a new future.

FINANCING

Funding the initial and the ongoing costs of Project DREAM is a huge challenge. Even though the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Daughters of Charity, and many CRS volunteers donate their services, startup costs in each country come to about \$850,000 dollars because of the need to train personnel, build a laboratory, buy equipment and medication, and obtain computer hardware and software. Once the program is established, ongoing costs are lower. But laboratory work, staff training, provision of food, and the purchase of drugs remain indispensable expense items. Fortunately, DREAM has been able to obtain approved drugs at a much lower price than is possible in the USA and Europe. The annual per patient cost for drug therapy is only \$300, a sum that seems small in the USA but is close to the total annual income of many Africans.

The Seton Institute, which has its seat in Daly City, California, has close historical connections with the Daughters of Charity and assists them in fund-raising. It seeks support for DREAM from private and public sources.

A recently established office of the Daughters of Charity in Southfield, Michigan, called International Project Services (IPS), is now also assisting very actively in the search for funds.

Since a sponsoring organization covers all of Seton's and IPS's operating costs, 100% of every contribution goes directly to aiding healthcare projects.

Because DREAM envisions so many patients in so many countries and because therapy for those who are already HIV-positive is life-long, the ongoing search for both public and private funds is essential.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

It is important not just to meet the immediate needs of the poor, but also to promote long-term systemic change. Of course, in projects like DREAM, where life and death are at stake, providing immediate help and working for systemic change are not an “either/or” option; they are a “both/and” imperative.

DREAM attempts to incorporate a series of strategies into its project design, so that its results will be sustainable in the long run. Principal among these are those listed below.

The project:

- 1) involves the poor themselves at all stages: planning, implementation, evaluation and revision.
- 2) enlists the service of the sick, so that AIDS victims whom DREAM has helped then assist other patients too.
- 3) aims to provide quality service, applying to Africa the state-of-the-art standards that are used in Western Europe and the United States. Quality is monitored regularly.
- 4) takes a holistic approach, addressing a series of basic human needs: especially health care, nutrition, and education.
- 5) forms indigenous people to administer and implement the program in an ongoing way.
- 6) builds in the human resources (e.g., leadership) and the economic resources which are needed for sustaining it.
- 7) creates, besides the measurable results it achieves, a sense of belonging, participation, and community “ownership.”
- 8) involves collaborative partnership among various sectors of society: the poor and sick themselves as the principal agents, local and national governments, the private sector (NGO’s, businesses), churches, and interested individuals. Prominent among the agents are the Daughters of Charity, the Community of Sant’Egidio, Catholic Relief Services, the US government (through PEPFAR), and private donors.

Joãozinho has become a symbol of DREAM and one of its most loved patients. He was the 1000th baby born to HIV-positive women receiving treatment. Like other children born in DREAM before and since, he now has the chance to lead a healthy life

Joãozinho has another reason to rejoice as he faces the future: his mother is alive and healthy and will take care of him in the years to come. Treatment helped her so much that, as her medication was phased down, her immune system became almost normal.



As the success of treatment at the DREAM Center in Matola, Mozambique, has become well-known, husbands are now coming in increasing numbers for testing. So it is very probable that Joãozinho will lose neither mother nor father and will avoid joining the ranks of the millions of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa.

STUDY

Ongoing Formation of Religious

by Cyril de Souza, S.D.B.

Introduction

The purpose of this intervention, “Ongoing Formation of Religious,” is to be situated in the general context of the problem of religious who are facing difficulties in their consecrated life and could be specifically considered as a means to meet the problem of vocation crisis, or more particularly the crisis of fidelity in one’s vocation.

There could be a number of specific motives for which a religious could have difficulties with religious consecration or with the vocational call. They could be on account of the problems that one has in the living and in the practice of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. There could also be a problems of community living and of interpersonal relationships. Some difficulties could also arise from some doubts about one’s religious calling, problems of prayer, or an intimate relationship with God or with Jesus Christ. All these are specific issues and have to be tackled directly and, at times, with specific therapeutic interventions including spiritual direction, psychological counseling, personal or group therapy and the like.

Ongoing formation of religious could, in particular instances, include even such services. But, the overall emphasis of this contribution is more in the lines of visualizing ongoing formation as a means that could offset the presentation of doubts, or problems, or difficulties with regard to one’s vocation. Hence, it would be better to consider this proposal of ongoing religious formation as a preventive means to thwart a crisis in one’s religious vocation.

We will first clarify what is meant by formation, ongoing formation and ongoing religious formation, with an in-depth analysis of the dynamics inherent to ongoing religious formation. An important aspect that I intend to elaborate is the transformational character of ongoing formation, and this will be examined from the

psychological and the spiritual points of view. This analysis will be followed by an examination of the dimensions and the content of ongoing formation. Finally, to conclude this excursus, we will see some practical suggestions from the pedagogical point of view.

1. Clarification of Terminology

First of all we need to clarify the meaning of the word “formation.” Etymologically, it is derived from the Latin verb *formare*, which would mean “to mould.”

In pedagogical literature, however, there are three words that should not be confused with “formation,” although they have a similar meaning and action. These are “education,” “instruction” and “learning.”¹ While “education” touches the entire person in his/her process of socialization, “instruction” is the educative act on the part of the educator who aims at transmitting a content of knowledge, and “learning” is the act on the part of the one who is educated in response to what is being offered in the act of education.

The term “formation” goes beyond these three concepts and its scope is a much more engaging notion both on the part of the formator, as well as on the part of the one in formation. In a way, formation could be identified with “education,” but, in its full sense, it has an aspect and a dimension that is much more demanding. This is so, because “formation” is not a particular act, that is done at some particular time of one’s life (as in the case of education or learning). Nor is it a simple communication of any particular content (as with teaching). “Formation” should be understood as a process that brings about a transformation in the person and that affects that person’s entire mode of existence.²

In this sense, “formation” is a lifelong process. For practical purposes various stages of formation can be envisaged, programmed or facilitated, but by its very concept “formation” lasts all through one’s life and hence it can be said that “formation” ends only at death.³ The full sense and meaning of “education,” and in our case of “formation” consists in creating human beings who are capable of

¹ Cf. C. NANNI, “Formazione,” in J.M. PRELLEZO - C. NANNI - G. MALIZIA (Eds.), *Dizionario delle Scienze dell’Educazione* (Elle Di Ci: Leumann [Turin] 1997), p. 432.

² Cf. SACRED CONGREGATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES, *The Religious and Human Promotion (12 August 1980)* (St. Paul Editions: Boston 1980), n. 33.

³ Cf. K. BELSOLE, “A Question of Models in Ongoing Formation,” in *Spirit and Word* (1995) 17, p. 76.

integrating their lives.⁴ Since our lives are constantly being modified by various events, happenings and relationships, this task of integration has to be done constantly, all throughout one's life, and that leads to reorganizing and restructuring one's life.

The formation of religious is the development of the human person to the point where one attains a sense of his/her responsibility in the use of freedom.⁵ What is expected is that the religious strives to grow in the life of the Spirit in faith, hope and charity through following Christ intimately and in constant conversion of heart. Hence, in this sense, religious life is a continuous learning process in which one should advance unceasingly in awareness to better serve the Lord. The consistent teaching of the Church is that religious should be committed all throughout their lives to develop and complete their spiritual, doctrinal and technical or professional formation with care and constancy.⁶

2. Understanding Ongoing Formation of Religious

The ongoing formation of religious is understood as the constant personalization or interiorization of Christ's life. Consequently it is a learning process, which involves change, growth and the transformation of the person. We are told that from the point of view of Canon Law, "perpetual profession, [is] the point of arrival, and at the same time it is the point of departure in religious life, integrally and progressively lived in the institute, and calls for the continual deepening of formation by responding to ever new necessities, thus rendering the religious capable of dynamic fidelity to God's design in the ever-changing circumstances and needs of the Church and the world."⁷

It is in this sense that ongoing formation is most popularly considered to begin only after initial formation is completed, when the religious is a mature adult and possesses a deep motivation and capacity to renew and perfect himself/herself permanently. However, it should be remarked that strictly speaking ongoing formation should more precisely be understood as an action that has its beginning right from the very start of religious formation, and is

⁴ Cf. J. KRISHNAMURTHI, *Education and the Significance of Life* (Krishnamurti Foundation India: Madras 1953), p. 14.

⁵ Cf. H. GRAY, "Integrating Human Needs in Religious Formation," in *Review for Religious* 53 (1994) 1, p. 134.

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁷ E. GAMBARI, *Religious Life. According to Vatican II and The New Code of Canon Law* (St. Paul Editions: Boston 1986), p. 250.

composed of different levels of learning each of them having intermediate goals as the individual acquires knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies. Each of these levels caters to the complete formation of the individual by creating favorable conditions of time and place and providing the necessary input for growth in religious life.

Thus, we should consider formation as ongoing, even though in practice it could be broken up in different stages. Hence, we can have formation in the pre-novitiate period, which has its specific goals to help the candidate prepare for the novitiate. The novitiate in its turn provides the specific formation to help the novice prepare for the first religious profession, which is followed by a post-novitiate formation which also has specific goals to help the young religious to put into practice and deepen the principles given in the earlier periods of vocational growth.

At different stages ongoing religious formation provides professional skills, preparation for new responsibilities and also a re-reading of one's personal life, so that every religious, helped also by external factors, may be able to reach a level of human and spiritual maturity and is able to carry out the work he/she must do in his/her life. The individual is expected to know the situation, the challenges and the demands of the vocational call that he/she has received.

Thus the entire action of formation is a process where the individual becomes more and more a disciple of Christ.⁸ In this way formation becomes a continuous process of conversion and of transformation. It takes into consideration the adoption of a certain style of Christian life, with its own expectations and responsibilities and the development of a specific spirituality.

Ongoing formation thus becomes the facilitation of the continuing growth of the whole person so as to promote a deeper and fuller commitment to the person and mission of Christ. It is not simply to give more information or knowledge or to produce people who are better informed. That is only part of the picture, but it is above all to help the person to believe more in oneself, to believe more in life, and to believe more in Christ. This demands a continuing conversion as a person moves forward in growth towards a more complete realization of the fullness of the person of Christ within oneself.⁹

⁸ Cf. D.F. O'CONNOR, *Witness and Service. Questions about Religious Life Today* (Paulist Press: New York 1990), p. 61.

⁹ Cf. K. McALPIN, "Conversion. A Summons from the Word of God," in *Review for Religious* 61 (2002) 1, p. 49.

3. The Reasons for Ongoing Formation of Religious

On the practical level, we can list three reasons that tell us that ongoing formation is important for religious life. The primary and basic reason for ongoing formation of religious is related above all to the challenges that contemporary culture and society present to a constant fidelity to one's religious vocation. We are living in times of radical and swift cultural changes which necessitate a constantly renewed way of facing the demands of culture.

The constantly changing times also call for new and fresh ways of reading, discerning and interpreting the signs of the times. This is the second reason that justifies the need for such an ongoing formation, where the religious is faithfully updated with the means of reading, discerning and interpreting these signs.

Finally, as the individual grows and matures in the human and in the spiritual life, the new elements that become part and parcel of one's experience need to be accommodated within the general perception and living out of one's vocation. It calls for rethinking one's vision of life and the meaning of religious vocation. This is the third reason that warrants a constant updating which is effected through ongoing formation.

Complementing these reasons in a more essential and existential way, it should be noted that John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, pointed out that whether in the case of institutes of apostolic life or of contemplative life, in either case ongoing religious formation is an intrinsic requirement of their consecration (VC 69). In his opinion, religious formation is not the prerogative of any particular age group, but that because of human frailness and limitations no consecrated person can claim to be completely formed for that way of life. Through religious consecration, the individual is expected to bring to life the "new creature," who in every circumstance of life reflects the very mind of Christ. This is a lifetime project that requires a basic disposition and readiness on the part of the individual to be formed every day of one's life.

4. The Dynamics of Ongoing Religious Formation

A deeper and more profound analysis of the actions involved in ongoing religious formation reveals the dynamics of this activity. Experts on education and formation provide us with an analysis of the process of formation from different points of emphasis and they highlight different aspects of the same reality. Broadly, there are three emphases and, although we mention the names of only three experts: Paul Gréger, Sante Bisignano and Amadeo Cencini, in

reality these three aspects are shared by many others. We will now examine these three emphases and, eventually, we will try to synthesize them in order to build up our understanding of ongoing religious formation as a preventive means to offset the crisis in vocations.

4.1. The Process of Becoming

Paul Griéger's understanding of ongoing formation grew in the context of secular formation. In that context he observes that an individual is not to be regarded as a static being, nor even as one whose acquired abilities and strengths deteriorate or decline. He believes that the individual in response to the educative stimuli is in a process of evolution and development of personal strengths, which comprise physical, psychic and spiritual components. Hence, essentially the human person lives a life of growth, of development and of maturation.¹⁰

There is a driving force within every human being to move towards becoming a mature adult and a responsible person, and this is complemented in the professional objective that every educator has. In this process of growth towards maturity in education, as well as in formation, there are four stages through which the individual has to pass, because they comprise the fourfold stages in the process of education or formation: knowing (*sapere*), knowing how to do (*saper fare*), knowing how to be (*saper essere*) and knowing how to become (*saper diventare*). In order to enter into the dynamics of ongoing formation it is imperative that the individual supersede the simple desire to learn (*imparare a imparare*), which is characteristic of initial formation, and should nurture the desire to learn to become (*imparare a divenire*).¹¹

The human being from birth to death never stops becoming and being guided. The desire to strive for perfection pushes one to constantly become better and to be more qualified, and this is a very important characteristic for a healthy and feasible process in ongoing formation. In order to respond to these personal characteristics, the process of ongoing religious formation and those responsible to provide occasions for such a formation should guarantee the

¹⁰ Cf. P. GRIÉGER, "La formazione permanente problema nuovo per gli Istituti religiosi," in COLLECTION, *La formazione permanente nella vita religiosa. XII Convegno "Claretianum"* (Editrice Rogate: Rome 1987), p. 12.

¹¹ Cf. P. GRIÉGER, "La formazione permanente negli istituti religiosi. Organizzazione pedagogica," in *Vita consecrata* 18 (1982) 3, p. 197.

existence of specific and different pastoral and professional capabilities. The doctrinal or theoretical aspects should be reformulated to meet the new ways of adult thinking. There should be new skills offered at all levels to meet the new responsibilities that the individual has to assume.

4.2. A Three-fold Fidelity

In the opinion of Sante Bisignano, an individual is continuously in a process of maturation, and this process goes on up to the very end of one's life. The same is true also with regard to the consecrated person. There is a continuous process of growth of all the constitutive elements of religious life and, therefore, ongoing religious formation is to be understood within this perspective. Ongoing formation cannot be limited to some definite chronological moment when some formative service is provided; nor can it be restricted to some intensive periods in the life of the religious (a spiritual retreat, an updating course, professional training program, etc.).¹² But, ongoing religious formation is intimately connected with the regular process of growth of the consecrated person and at every moment of his/her existence.

For a full understanding of ongoing formation, one should visualize it as an integral growth of the individual. Just as the individual is in a continuous process of maturation, so also the aspects connected with his/her consecration are in continuous maturation towards the full realization of the self in Christ. Within a specific religious institute this maturation is colored by the specific charism of the founder of that institute.

There are different elements that make up the consecrated person's life (interior life, apostolic life, affective life, interpersonal relationship, intimacy with God, etc.) and, in the process of growth and maturity, each of these elements, and all these elements should likewise grow. Such an integral growth will take place through the continuous assimilation of the evangelical values, of prayer and of the study of the Word of God, and of full participation in the sacraments.

In terms of integrated growth, ongoing formation should be addressed to the full maturation of the consecrated person. This will certainly take into account the psychology of the individual as well as

¹² Cf. S. BISIGNANO, "Itinerario di formazione alla vita religiosa," in COLLECTION, *Vita consacrata un dono del Signore alla sua Chiesa* (Elle Di Ci: Leumann [Turin] 1994), p. 314.

the intensity of one's spiritual growth. Therefore, the individual is the measure of this growth, because the individual is also the principal subject of formation. Consequently, there is need to clarify the main objectives of formation. It is for this purpose that he speaks of the threefold fidelities that comprise all these objectives.

In the maturation and growth of one's consecration there are three points of reference, and each of these three elements is to become evident and visible. 1. The following of Christ is the first and fundamental criterion of consecration; namely, to follow Christ poor, chaste and obedient in day-to-day life situations. 2. The second criterion consists in living out, as best as possible, the Gospel message and the Gospel value to the point of being a valid witness and testimony to the world. 3. The third criterion consists in the commitment to the ecclesial mission through the fulfillment of service to humanity in the world.¹³ These three fidelities become reference points of the maturation process of the religious: fidelity to Christ, fidelity to humanity, and fidelity to the Church.

4.3. Integrated and Unified Growth

Analyzing the development of the term "ongoing formation," Amadeo Cencini understands it as an unique way of favoring the real growth of the human person, which does not remain at the mere intellectual level, but becomes unified and integrated in one's personality. The lack of such a continuous formation could therefore have a debilitating and a frustrating effect on the human person, because the constitutive elements of consecration remain un-integrated and disjointed.

For the purpose of religious ongoing formation, Cencini highlights the need to work in order to build up a unity and integration in one's life. For this purpose, personal motivation and conviction on the part of the individual are important factors that spur one towards such a formation all through life. Since involvement in daily life tends to dissipate one, there is need for a continuous action in favor of focus and centrality with the intention of giving coherence to one's life. Thus, ongoing religious formation is to be understood as a process to recover and restore to a unified whole what is really central in a person's consecrated life. The key word would be "radical belonging,"

¹³ Cf. S. BISIGNANO, "La formazione permanente linee fondamentali, criteri e itinerari," in COLLECTION, *La formazione permanente nella vita religiosa* (Editrice Rogate: Rome 1984), pp. 54-55.

so that all the elements of one's life are focused, centered, integrated and unified in the choice and in the living out of one's vocation.¹⁴

When this intention to unify and integrate is nurtured and the individual is docile, then the principal agent of formation, God the Father, is able to patiently build and rebuild the consecrated person into the image of his Son, Jesus. Such an action covers one's entire life, and it demands a daily readiness on the part of the religious to respond in conversion, renewal, self-gift and holiness.

It is for this reason that Cencini considers constant docility and readiness on the part of the religious to be in continuing formation as a fundamental requirement. This docility is expressed in specific attitudes which should always accompany the individual: vigilance, discernment, asceticism, prayer, study, involvement in the apostolate, participation in community life, and evaluation on the personal and on the community level. These attitudes should accompany the religious all through life.

5. Ongoing Formation as Transformation

The ongoing formation of religious is often understood as a "consolidating" action by which the initial response of the individual to the vocational call is through different phases of formation further clarified, strengthened and made constantly mature. As the individual begins to respond to the religious call, he/she begins to be aware and to understand step by step and stage by stage the deeper implications of that call and of the corresponding response.

Thus, there is a gradual deepening and a continual growth of that initial response towards the fullness of the imitation of Christ and a slow and steady growth in becoming perfect just as the heavenly Father is perfect. All this comprises the consolidating dimension of ongoing religious formation.

However, there is another aspect of ongoing formation, which should not be lost sight of, and that concerns "transformation." Besides consolidating the response through a continuing ongoing formation, the individual in his/her growth in vocation realizes the need for a constant transformation in the process of the imitation of Christ and in becoming perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect. What really is this transformation? What are the implications of transformation?

¹⁴ Cf. A. CENCINI, "An Institution at the Service of Formation," in F. IMODA (Ed.), *A Journey to Freedom. An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Anthropology of Formation* (Peeters: Leuven 2000), p. 438.

Discovering the etymology of the word *transformation* gives us a better understanding of what it implies. The word *transformation* is made up of two Latin words, *trans* and *forma*, where *trans* could mean “across, over, on the other side.” In combination with *forma* it would literally mean “a change of form” and, according to its use, it could refer to any type of change, as for instance, a change of character, or of clothing style, or even more importantly of consciousness.¹⁵

It is this kind of transformation that we will look into now; however, at the very outset, it should be pointed out that it is a complex process involving thoughts and feelings. Transformational learning has far-reaching consequences on personality, more than any other kind of learning. It is a learning experience that shapes the learner and produces a significant impact to the point of affecting the learner’s subsequent experiences. In a transformational learning process one’s “meaning perspective” changes; “meaning perspective” refers to one’s overall world view, which comprises specific knowledge, values and beliefs. Usually one’s meaning perspective is passively formed right through one’s life experiences in childhood, during the youthful years and in young adulthood. These elements serve as a filter in perceiving the present reality and in determining how to organize and interpret one’s current experiences. Through the process of ongoing formation the religious should acquire self-knowledge and, by rational discourse and critical reflection, explore the depth and meaning of the elements that make up one’s worldview in order to produce a more inclusive worldview. The success of the outcome is rated by the development of greater autonomy as a person,¹⁶ which in a way also defines the condition of adulthood.

Transformational learning can be attained only to the extent that one uses the tools of critical reflection and rational discourse in order to arrive at a self-knowledge that is total, deep and long-lasting (psychological effects). In the same strain it should be added that this transformational learning reorganizes one’s perspective and will seriously affect the intimacy of relationship and vision that one has of God and other spiritual realities (spiritual effects). “The full development of religious values and Christian sanctity in a soul is

¹⁵ Cf. M. STEIN, *Transformation. Emergence of the Self* (A & M University Press: Laredo 1998), p. 51; see also: B. BAYNHAM, “Transformation,” in M. DOWNEY (Ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville 1993), p. 967.

¹⁶ Cf. J. MEZIROV, *Transformative Dimension of Adult Learning* (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco 1991) pp. 145-146.

inconceivable if a man does not start out with a healthy mind, well balanced in its activities.”¹⁷ This affirmation seems to imply that any deficiency in mental health would be an obstacle to full spiritual development. It further assumes that psychological growth and spiritual growth are interrelated. The greater the psychological maturity acquired, the greater are the possibilities for spiritual development.

5.1. Psychological Aspects of Transformation

From the psychological point of view, transformation is a process that brings about a new form of life, something different from what preceded it. It does not mean that the personality is changed, but that there is a new inner centre of value and direction. There is a new consciousness in that person. Erick Erikson, Erich Fromm and Carl Rogers explore the factors that accompany personal transformation. These psychologists believe that human maturation is a lifelong process and an outcome of lifelong experiences. They insist that transformation is a gradual growth that is done in freedom. They also stress one's openness to experience and they consider self-realization as a goal of life.

5.1.1. *Erick Erikson*

To better comprehend Erickson's understanding of transformation we need to have an ample grasp of his proposal of the eight stages of the lifecycle in reaching mature adulthood, and through these stages he gives a panoramic view of the psychological growth of the human being. In each of them he enumerates the positive and negative attitudes, together with the emerging basic strengths and basic antipathies at each stage.

His basic assumption is that a human being's existence depends at every moment on three processes of organization that must complement each other. There is the biological process of the hierarchic organization of organ systems constituting a body (*soma*), then there is the psychic process of organizing individual experience by ego synthesis (*psyche*) and finally there is the communal process of the cultural organization of the interdependence of person (*ethos*).¹⁸ The development of the individual takes place in various

¹⁷ M.J. O'BRIEN - R.J. STEIMEL, *Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Development* (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington 1965), p. 23.

¹⁸ Cf. E. ERIKSON, *Life History and Historical Moment* (W.W. Norton: New York 1975), p. 19.

stages, and one's personality growth is the task of the ego and of the social process together to maintain that continuity, which bridges the inescapable discontinuity between each of the stages.

The eight stages in the psychosocial development of the human being are: infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood and old age. Each of these stages is characterized by a specific developmental task, and society requires the subject to master that task at a given stage. This creates a conflict or crisis in the developing individual. "Crisis" here is understood by him as a "turning point" or a "second birth," with heightened potentiality for healthy personality development. Only in crisis does the best in a person reveal itself. Erikson's understanding of crisis is important. It gives light to see difficulties and obstacles as ways to grow in an authentic way and the chance to see one's own capacities.

Linked to this is the key problem of identity. Through one's growth to adulthood, there is the formation of identity, which involves a process of simultaneous reflection and observation that takes place on all levels of mental functioning. It is a dynamic process, always changing and ever-developing. It is a stage of being and becoming. In this process of growth, true religious identity depends heavily on the support received from the collective sense of identity from the religious community. Identity formation is relatively successful in ongoing religious formation, because psychological development leads through the fulfillment of adult phases to a final integrity.

In the ongoing formation process, the period of adulthood can be either very enriching or just the opposite, both at the personal as well as at the community level. It could benefit both the older and the younger religious. The older religious can contribute their deep life experience to the younger generation, and the youngsters can also contribute their modern values to the older religious. In this way both personal life and community life will be enriched.

In ongoing formation, in the restructuring of the personality, it is extremely important to give opportunity to the individual to see his/her personality at its deepest level and to reconstruct his/her life in the light of the Gospel. It is also very important in the ongoing formation process, even though late, to provide chances and knowledge to integrate life and to avoid despair. For this a community needs to include professionals who can assist the religious to be capable of leading one's life in the light of Christ and bring integration while approaching old age.

5.1.2. *Erich Fromm*

Fromm's contribution to our study of ongoing religious formation begins with the difference he makes between two components of personality: the first is temperament, which comprises one's inherited psychological qualities and gifts; and the second is character, which is made up of one's acquired qualities. The basic tools for the development of the character of one's personality are those gifts and qualities that one has inherited and which are permanent constitutional elements of a person's psychic makeup. The conscious effort made on the part of the individual is also modified by socio-cultural influences in the environment. The character of a person is expressive of the degree to which one has succeeded in the art of living, and it is in this domain of character that one's personality is stabilized.¹⁹

There are two basic patterns, according to Fromm, that typically exist side by side in every individual. One is the productive character, which concentrates on giving to others through love and work. The other is the non-productive character, that is not only not able to produce, but has to receive from others what he/she needs. This can happen either by one's passive behavior or by some active effort. In the development of character, there are, according to Fromm, two factors that influence this process. One is socialization, by which a person relates to others and one's self and is willing to offer care. The other is assimilation, by which one acquires or assimilates desired objects. A well-adjusted person possesses a character based on a fairly permanent pattern, in which the two processes have been properly blended.²⁰

Basically, the life of a consecrated person is a call to be at the service of others. Hence, it is obvious that religious should be productive at the personal and at the community level and at the level of the apostolate according to the charism of the institute. Through the continual exercise of love, one is able to develop this productive character. Discipline, concentration and patience are, in the opinion of Fromm, the qualities that one needs to practice love.²¹

One of the chief contributions that Fromm makes to psychology in one's growth towards becoming a productive personality is his insistence on some basic existential needs. 1. The need of relatedness,

¹⁹ Cf. E. FROMM, *The Sane Society* (Rinehart & Company: New York 1958), p. 32.

²⁰ Cf. E. FROMM, *The Art of Loving* (Harper & Brothers: New York 1956), p. 23.

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-110.

which refers to the necessity to unite with other living beings. He considers being related to others as an intrinsic need in so far as one's sanity depends on the fulfillment of relatedness. 2. The need for transcendence, which implies the need to rise above one's sense of being a creature and becoming instead a creator in one's own right by furthering or engendering life. 3. The need of rootedness, which refers to affective ties with others. Without such strong ties, one would suffer from utter isolation and feel lost in this world. 4. The sense of identity, the need for which stems from the very condition of human existence and is the source of most intense strivings. 5. The need of orientation, or at least, that one has a frame of orientation, and is in touch with one's reality in an objective way.

If ongoing formation can provide the religious with ways to reread the rootedness of their existence, it will assist them in deepening this human need to be rooted. Even in the uniqueness of the charism of the institute, this rootedness will find its centre in the Gospel values and in the teaching of Jesus. Timely verification such as monthly recollections, annual retreats and similar occasions will help the religious to deepen this rootedness.

5.1.3. *Carl Rogers*

Rogers' contribution is based on the full functioning of the human person. He believed that every human person has vast internal potentialities and is called to realize them. He called this process of realizing them "self-actualization." Personal choice plays an important role in this process of becoming oneself and in one's self-actualization.²² To actualize one's true potentials, one must follow the inner guidelines provided by an organic system of values. This self-actualization is achieved by positive recognition from others. Thus ongoing religious formation programs should help the individual religious to focus on the importance of finding one's own potentials and also become one's real self.

In the modern world there are different ways of achieving self-actualization. Work, drugs, loneliness and prayer are some of the means people have used to become self-actualized. Rogers gives importance to the process of the formation of an organic system of values. According to his theory, a self-actualizing person is in touch with the inner experience that is inherently growth-producing. Experiences are valued in terms of growth, and this force becomes a subconscious guide that helps the individual to choose those that

²² Cf. C. ROGERS, *On Becoming a Person* (Mifflin: Boston 1961), p. 13.

promote growth and reject what inhibits growth. This attitude he called, the *formative tendency*, which he contrasted to the other tendency to randomness.²³ Without an authentic witness of living testimonies it is not easy to highlight the Gospel values. Hence the importance of communities and individuals, who give witness in the way they follow Christ.

Rogers proposed another aspect that helps us to understand the process of becoming a mature person. He referred to a discrepancy between the “ideal self” and the “real self.” The real self contains a person’s true or real qualities, which he termed the actualizing tendency. He called the conflict between the real and the ideal self *incongruence*. A person experiences the real self as threatening when there is incongruence. But, when there is freedom one can move in one’s thinking and feeling and being, in whichever direction that person intends. By this process the individual sheds the false masks, fronts, roles of the ideal self, and gradually discovers something more basic and true in the real self.²⁴ Moving towards the real self is a way for a religious in ongoing formation to become a mature personality and a fully functioning person.

For this purpose one needs openness, first of all, with regard to one’s own experiences. The first step in this direction is readiness to be aware of one’s self, and this can be done by shedding barriers and inhibitions. These barriers, like the false concept of self and the non-acceptance of others, are eliminated by self-awareness and by an openness to others. For a positive change to occur the person must perceive the three characteristics that Rogers regarded as essential to any successful relationship: genuineness (i.e., to be in touch with one’s own inner experience and to be able to express it when appropriate), empathy (i.e., to understand the other person’s feelings and beliefs) and unconditional positive regard (i.e., a non-judgmental and non-possessive respect and caring for the other person’s self-concept and feelings).

5.2. Spiritual Aspects of Transformation

From the spiritual point of view it should be pointed out that transformation is primarily attributed to the grace of God, but it also involves human cooperation. In this sense, transformation could

²³ Cf. C. ROGERS, “The Foundations of the Person Centred Approach,” in *Education* (1979) 100, pp. 98-107.

²⁴ Cf. C. ROGERS, *On Becoming a Person*, p. 339.

also be called conversion.²⁵ The deeper and more authentic the experience, the more profound are the changes in the person. It is difficult for one who has had a true experience to resist change. In the same coin it could be said that it is difficult to change one's life if significant experiences are absent.²⁶ A spiritual person is one who has decided to respond to God's call, which he/she has experienced, and then strives to make that call the centre of activity and of choice. In other words, the call becomes the integrating factor for that person. Hence, the truth that spiritual life becomes the work of a lifetime can be reemphasized.

Spiritual transformation is the consistent conviction of the ever-abiding presence of God rather than a particular experience or even a set of experiences. It is a restructuring of one's consciousness in which the divine reality is perceived to be present. One can grow towards physical adulthood merely by continuing to breathe, but more is required of emotional development and maturity and much more is required of full spiritual development. It is not by simply *knowing* God that one is transformed, but by being fully united with him that one reaches one's ultimate destiny.

5.2.1. *Stages of Spiritual Transformation*

Time and space are needed for spiritual transformation to take place. An individual goes through a number of phases in the whole process of becoming a spiritual person. The person must experience crisis, resistance, surrender and integrity.²⁷ When the consecrated person begins to integrate the different experiences and elements of life, then transformation begins to take place.

The first stage is that of restlessness, or crisis. The individual is faced with a number of existential questions, like: Who am I? What is my uniqueness in this world? What is my special mission? It is in these moments of crisis that the individual has to answer the questions to verify one's own existence. When one finds one's core self or true self, transformation is taking place.

The next stage could be one of struggle. It is sometimes called a desert experience, when one has to struggle to let go of things, which

²⁵ Cf. B. BAYNHAM, "Transformation," in M. DOWNEY (Ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Liturgical Press: Collegeville 1993), p. 967.

²⁶ Cf. E. ALBERICH - J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith that Transforms. Handbook of Fundamental Catechetics* (Kristu Jyoti Publications: Bangalore 2004), p. 77.

²⁷ Cf. C. SERRAO, *Discernment of Religious Vocation. Formation Towards Transformation* (Dhyanavana: Mysore 2004), pp. 140-142.

are comfortable for that person, and to which one has been accustomed. The price of letting go is very high, because there is insecurity and uncertainty.

Surrender to God is the next important stage. In that situation of struggle, the individual feels the need for an unconditional and total abandonment to God. It is a difficult stage, but peace flows once one surrenders. This surrender to God includes a renunciation of all delusion, of false images of self, of an exaggerated assessment of one's capabilities and by giving in to God's will one finds peace.

The final stage of spiritual transformation is integration. Integration means the capacity to unite all the aspects of life, even in the midst of one's struggles. Fundamentally, it is a call to reality, or to radicalism. Total spiritual transformation is in this radical reorganization of one's life.

5.2.2. Goals of Spiritual Transformation

The life of the consecrated person is not a static one, but it is dynamic and in continuous becoming, where the ultimate and final aim of one's consecration leads that individual to a spiritual transformation. This transformation to become a spiritual person is a gradual process, with day-to-day commitment towards one's own mission and call. Configuration to Christ and intimacy with him call for a continuous process of conversion, or spiritual transformation. In actual fact, the goal of spiritual transformation would be the integration of the mature personality. The midterm goals would be the small steps that one has to traverse to reach the final goal.

1. *Radical Conversion*: Conversion is the radical transformation in all the dimensions of human experience. They comprise the affective, moral, socio-political, intellectual, somatic and religious dimensions. Of all these dimensions, the spiritual dimension is central and comprises the fullest meaning of conversion. The movement of radical conversion is a movement of faith, which is a gift, and it begins within one's being. It is important that the individual be open in faith to receive this gift, so that conversion may be realized radically and affect every element of the individual personality and life.

2. *Configuration with Christ*: The life of the consecrated person and his/her development to maturity are to be understood in terms of configuration with Christ. This is the starting principle and the goal towards which every aspect of the consecrated person's life tends. It constitutes the fabric of the entire life of the consecrated person and of the community. This configuration should be realized in such a

way that by the testimony of the religious the world is made aware of Christ and of his Church. Every attempt of the consecrated person to be a disciple of Christ (*sequela Cristi*) makes this configuration more real. The living out of the evangelical counsels — poverty, chastity and obedience — is another help to a real configuration with Christ.

3. *Growing Intimacy with Christ*: This is another important goal of spiritual transformation, as it encompasses the meaning of religious consecration. In order to acquire intimacy with Christ, one has to develop the capacity to relate deeply with Christ, which in turn requires other intimacies, as for instance, with self, with others and ultimately with God. This intimacy with Christ is expressed by a generous self-giving and self-surrender to Christ both in the community and in the apostolate.

4. *Integral Growth of the Personality*: The full meaning of spiritual transformation is in the ability of the individual to attain personal integration and wholeness. On the practical level, spiritual authors suggest a number of steps to achieve this integral growth of personality, each according to their spiritual orientation. As for instance they could be: awareness, sensitivity, acceptance, reflection, conviction, decision to change, commitment, action and evaluation.²⁸ Another suggestion consists in a fourfold fidelity: fidelity to Christ and the Gospel, fidelity to the Church and to its mission in the world, fidelity to religious life and the charism of one's own institute, and fidelity to humanity and to our times.²⁹ Still another could see integration as a fivefold awareness of and unity with: self, God, community, society and nature.³⁰

5. *Contemplation*: In the mind of great spiritual masters like Saint John of the Cross and Saint Theresa of Avila, spiritual transformation reaches its highest degree and perfection in an intimate union and a total identification with Christ, which leads to contemplation of the Lord. Contemplation means to see things as God sees them. In contemplative vision one perceives the transformative work of God in the world. The state of contemplation is thus the ultimate goal of spiritual transformation and the fullness of religious consecration. This could also be called, living in the awareness of God's presence.

²⁸ Cf. P.J. ABRAHAM - B. PARANGIMALIL, *Images for Human Wholeness* (Pangaya Publications: Bangalore 1995), p. 49.

²⁹ Cf. A. PARDILLA, *Christ's Way of Life at the Centre of Formation of Religious Life* (Rogate: Rome 2005), p. 271.

³⁰ Cf. D.S. AMALORPAVADASS, *Integration and Interiorisation* (Anjali Ashram: Mysore 1990), p. 10.

5.2.3. Sources of Spiritual Transformation

Spiritual transformation takes place when the human person collaborates with God's grace. God's grace is particularly available to the consecrated person through four major sources, and with their assistance one is capable of a profound spiritual transformation and being open to transcendence and hence to a relationship with God and Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The following are the four powerful sources for spiritual transformation.

1. *The Word of God*: The Bible, which is the font and source of the Word of God, has played an important role in the personal spiritual lives of many people down through the centuries. A prayerful listening to the Scriptures opens one's heart to hear not only words about God, but words from God. It is thus a means of grace to help one's life journey to a sacred relationship with Christ and a sacred fellowship in the Trinity. The Holy Spirit also plays an important role in understanding the Scriptures. The prophets, in their call and in their response to that call, show the power and the centrality of the Word of God. The Word has the power to enlighten and transform life. One who is touched by the Word of God is personally transformed, and this transformation has an effect also on one's life in the community and in the apostolate.

2. *Charism*: This is God's special gift to a religious institute for the good of the Church. It is the Holy Spirit's way to show the richness of the practice of the evangelical counsels in a specific way. Charism can also be described as a window on the Word of God, or a framed vision of people following Jesus that attracts them to do so in a similar way. Though founders and foundresses desired to live the whole Gospel, they were generally struck by some particular Gospel passages, and based their lifestyle and apostolate on those passages. The grace and call to live the founders' charism forms part of God's wonderful plan for the salvation of the world. The consecrated person who lives out these charisms finds in them the potential to transform his/her life and to become more a spiritual person through his/her life and service.

3. *Apostolate*: God's call of the consecrated person is a gift to be shared with others. This sharing is the apostolate. Just as the Lord gathered his disciples to be with him and then he sent them out to preach (Mk 3:14), so too we can speak of two parts of the process of participating in the mission: the first part involves union with Christ, or centering one's life on Christ, and the second part is the involvement in the mission, which consists in proclaiming Jesus to others. Thus, the apostolate also has its place in the spiritual transformation of the religious, because it demands a union with the

Lord before involvement in the apostolate. It is the intensity of one's clinging to the Lord that will render fruitful roles and activities exercised in the service of others. It is profound union with the Lord that enables one to communicate and confirm, with his/her life, the message of Christ to humanity in a language that can be understood.

4. *Sacraments*: The sacraments are channels of grace and the power of Christ and are the most powerful sources for the spiritual growth and maturity of the consecrated person. In a particular way the Eucharist becomes the heart of spiritual transformation. Religious are able to nourish their lives from this central sacrament of Christian life. Above all, the Eucharist brings about communion with Christ and strengthens the commitment of the religious. Confession and the Eucharist ought to be, especially for the consecrated person, irreplaceable instruments of purification, strength, illumination and union with God.

6. Dimensions of Ongoing Religious Formation

Ongoing religious formation concerns the consecrated person at all stages of life and thus, besides being all inclusive as far as the stages and the moments of the life of the religious are concerned, it is equally all inclusive even in so far as it concerns the entire person. Two premises need to be affirmed before entering into a discussion of the dimensions of ongoing religious formation.

First of all, any moment or stage in the process of religious formation embraces all the dimensions of the individual because anthropology requires one's integral promotion.³¹ It would be a lopsided way of looking at a person in formation, where only one dimension is considered to be formed, leaving all the others unaffected. As for instance, when a religious is undergoing professional training, or is engaged in studies, it would be improper to consider that only the intellectual dimension is being formed, without having any consequence on the spiritual life of that person, or on cultural aspects, or on the apostolic effectiveness of that person.

Secondly, it should be borne in mind that any formation process is primarily a learning process, which involves change, growth and a transformation of the entire person, and therefore touches the different dimensions of the individual.³² Although we agree

³¹ Cf. L.M. RULLA, *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation*, Vol. 1 (Gregorian University Press: Rome 1986) p. 33.

³² Cf. M. ANATHARACKAL, *Psycho-Spiritual Dimensions of Formation* (Dharmaram Publications: Bangalore 2001), p. 218.

and reaffirm an earlier mentioned conviction that one of the characteristics of ongoing formation is that it is integral, only for the purpose of a deeper insight into the different aspects influenced by this formation process, we will consider the different dimensions of the process of ongoing religious formation separately.

We will examine the following five dimensions of ongoing religious formation: human, spiritual, doctrinal, cultural and charismatic.

6.1. Human Dimension

Vita Consecrata asserts that formation should involve the whole person, in every aspect of one's personality, at the level of behavior and at the level of intention (VC 65). Since the human person is a conscious and free being, who is called to grow in self-fulfillment, this should lead to self-mastery in freedom, and it entails the personal responsibility to live it interpersonally, striving towards the fulfillment of self and of others.

Life is a constant journey towards maturity, which cannot be attained except by constant reminders of this fact through formation. The human dimension of the consecrated life calls for self-knowledge and the realistic awareness of one's limitations. Relationships with others hold a particular place in one's living in community and working in the apostolate. Hence, special importance must be given to the inner freedom of consecrated persons through their affective maturity, their ability to communicate with others with serenity, especially in their own community, and in compassion for those who are suffering, both in the community and those with whom they interact in their field of apostolate.

Both for community living as well as for the work in the apostolate the consecrated person requires a certain level of intelligence, which comprises the ability to grasp the essence of what is happening in relationship and in work. Forming of intelligence comprises four principle functions: to analyze, to synthesize, to relate and to judge.³³ This intelligence, it is true, could sometimes be called *common sense*, and thus, intelligence could be understood as the conscious exercise of this *common sense*.

Together with the formation of intelligence, the way to human maturity would also require the formation of one's will. A person's will is where one sets a course that will guide and control one's entire

³³ Cf. M. MARCIEL, *Integral Formation of Catholic Priests* (Alba House: New York 1992), p. 26.

being. Forming the will comprises the exercise of wanting to do good, wanting to do it earnestly, wanting to do it effectively and seeking constantly to practice it. Another aspect of the formation of one's will includes the renunciation of one's whims by responsibly choosing to fulfill one's duty and to give up one's personal plans freely in order to uphold the dignity and liberty of the choices of others.

Another aspect of human formation and growth consists in the responsibility of developing one's God-given potential and talents. One's life itself is a gift from God and the complete living out of this life requires the full collaboration of the individual to bring it to fruition by putting to good use one's life, one's talents and capabilities both for the good of others in the community and in the exercise of the apostolate.

With the strong conviction that spirituality cannot be developed without humanity, personal development must start with a well-grounded human formation. A healthy personality development is the most fertile soil in which grace can take root and grow and produce fruit. Human growth takes place in stages, with each stage presupposing that the previous stage has been well constructed and building the next stage of human development upon that. This principle requires that every individual know where he/she is and be deeply committed to proceed forward, stage by stage, on one's personal journey.³⁴

Finally, the religious has to keep in mind that this personal human growth and maturity should proceed also in accordance with the spiritual patrimony of the institute. The fullness of the individual's call and commitment is in being in agreement with the specific style of carrying out the apostolate. The charism of the institute will find its full flowering in an individual when there is an integrated maturity of the different constitutive elements of personality.³⁵

6.2. Spiritual Dimension

The *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes (Potissimum Institutioni)* present three basic motivations for spiritual ongoing formation: 1. the vocation of a consecrated person itself requires a special and a personal attention to the workings of the Spirit; 2. the

³⁴ Cf. A. WILKIE, "The Teaching of Spirituality in the Formation Programme of Religious Orders," in *The Way Supplement* (1995) 84, p. 55.

³⁵ Cf. B. MARINELLI, "Contributions Towards the Integrated Formation of the Person," in J. COTTON (Ed.), *Growing Together in Christ. Personal Development in the Religious Life* (New City: Dublin 1988), p. 123.

rapidly changing context in which we live requires that the consecrated person have deep spiritual roots; and 3. the future of every religious institute is strongly linked to the spiritual formation of its members.³⁶ It, therefore, opts for the formation of the spiritual dimension of consecrated persons.

According to the very nature of the vocation and life of a consecrated person the search for God and the development of spiritual life acquire a particular importance, which has its expression particularly in different forms of asceticism and spirituality. As a matter of fact, all other dimensions of formation find their fulfillment in spiritual formation. The exercises needed to develop the spiritual dimension are: listening and meditating upon the Word of God, a thirst for prayer, responsiveness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, commitment to the service of others, willingness to make sacrifices and the desire to deepen spiritual experiences.

Theologically speaking the end of spiritual formation is the perfection of charity. God is love, and hence pursuing the spiritual dimension comprises constant fidelity to the development of an intimate relationship with God, expressed in a fellowship with Jesus Christ and culminating in an intimate union with him.³⁷ There is no denying the fact that spiritual formation is motivated first of all by the initiative of God who calls each one at every moment and in every circumstance of life. Therefore the basis of the spiritual dimension in the religious is precisely the awareness that one's vocation is from God. Hence, it is necessary to constantly discern this call and follow with fidelity this call; i.e., be constantly faithful to the will of God in every moment of one's life.

Coupled with this awareness is the special role that the charism of the founder has in one's spiritual life. It is a gift of the Spirit that is to be received, safeguarded, deepened and constantly developed by the religious. For this purpose one needs to pay close attention to the signs of the Spirit and be sensitive to respond to them appropriately. Just as the founders and foundresses of religious institutes were sensitive to the mysterious signs of the Spirit, even the consecrated person today must be sensitive and docile to that

³⁶ See: CONGREGATION FOR INSTITUTES OF CONSECRATED LIFE AND SOCIETIES OF APOSTOLIC LIFE, *Potissimum Institutioni. Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes* (2 February 1990) (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Vatican City 1990), n. 67.

³⁷ Cf. M. KATO, *Christian Self-Surrender. Spiritual Transformation in the Paschal Christ* (Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas: Rome 1988), p. 20.

same Spirit and allow himself/herself to be guided by that Spirit. An important help to the full development of this charism is a continual examination of conscience to ensure fidelity to the Spirit who is active in one's life.

6.3. Doctrinal Dimension

The *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes (Potissimum Institutioni)* once again give some clear ideas about this doctrinal updating by suggesting a deepening of the biblical and theological perspectives of the religious. This document recommends also the reading of ecclesial documents, both of the universal magisterium as well as those of the local Church.³⁸

In the case of priest members, it would be important that they be constantly updated in their doctrinal, biblical, theological, liturgical and moral knowledge. While the reading of books is important and helpful, they should not forget that they should go to the original sources to acquire this knowledge: Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Fathers and Doctors of the Church and the Magisterium.

Provincial communities could offer their members occasions for the ongoing formation of their doctrinal dimension by organizing courses or conferences of a theological, biblical or spiritual nature for the updating of their members. The local communities on their part could also offer their contribution to this ongoing formation of the doctrinal dimension by providing a well-stocked library in the community, which should also be easily accessible to the members. There should also be subscriptions to theological and spiritual journals and reviews and other similar material, so that members may have easy access to information that could help their intellectual ongoing formation.

6.4. Charismatic Dimension

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelica Testificatio*, on the renewal and adaptation of religious institutes, Pope Paul VI made a direct reference to *charism* as the patrimony of every religious institute.³⁹ The charism of a religious institute, a gift of the Holy

³⁸ Cf. *Potissimum Institutioni* n. 68.

³⁹ See PAUL VI, "Evangelica Testificatio. The Renewal of Religious Life According to the Teaching of the Second Vatican Council (29 June 1971)," in A. FLANNERY (Ed.), *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (St. Paul's: Mumbai 2001), n. 11.

Spirit to the Church, provides a constant orientation to that institute and to each of its members, and permits, at the same time, scope for internal growth according to the changed times.

Founders and foundresses interpreted the charism they received from the Holy Spirit in the light of the Word of God and in accordance to the demands and needs of their own times both in society and in the Church. These charisms, which are distinct, though not separate, from personal gifts and qualities, whether innate or acquired, form part of the apostolate and way of living of that religious institute; i.e., in action and in organization. They are a profound way of being conformed to Christ and of giving witness to some particular aspect of his mystery.

Each and every member of a religious institute in the initial period of one's life should assimilate this institutional charism and experience it practically in the apostolate. Subsequently one should assess the significance of that charism and re-express it in the changed circumstances of one's life. This patrimony which is now reformulated and re-expressed in terms of the contemporary needs of society is then transmitted to the next generation. Ongoing formation would require that members have the time and occasion to personally study one's charism, to reflect on one's experience of it, and to share these reflections with others.

The charism of an institute intrinsically comprises a communitarian dimension. It can only be understood and reconstructed in all its richness of values and content together with other members of the institute, because all of them are jointly depositories and bearers of that charism.⁴⁰ A help in this regard could come from occasional sharing of these experiences and reflections in community assemblies and in prayer.

6.5. Apostolic Dimension

The ongoing formation of the apostolic dimension of a religious would involve a constant review of the objectives of the apostolate and a regular updating of the methods employed in apostolic works, but always in such a way that it is in fidelity to the spirit of the institute and the aims and the charism of the founder. It will be a form of activity, which, on the one hand, will be responsive to the

⁴⁰ Cf. F. CHIARDI, "The Charism of Founders and Foundresses, as Word of Life, Always Remains Uncontaminated, Prophetic and Current," in *Formation of Consecrated Life* (Associate Members of General Curia: Rome 2000-2003), [unpublished], p. 313.

rich historical traditions of that religious institute, and, on the other hand, will have an ever-present sensitivity and attention to the changing cultural conditions, both at the general level of society and at the local levels of the apostolate.⁴¹

There are two sides to this apostolic dimension: one consists in maintaining what pertains to tradition, and the other concerns the updating of methods and forms of ministry and apostolate in agreement with recent developments in the pastoral field.

Ministry demands and consumes energy and enthusiasm. One must have adequate provision to support and strengthen the efforts in ministry lest one manifest a lack of motivation and a loss of meaning to those for whom one works. Closely related to this is the need to evaluate one's corporate ministries to determine the level of their continuing responsiveness and relevance to current and developing needs. The apostolic dimension of religious life challenges not only individuals, but also communities to periodically examine the actual needs being met through individual and community services.⁴²

Thus, the apostolic dimension of the life of a religious becomes one of the most important areas that demands a constant updating and renewal both at the personal level as well as at the community level.

6.6. Cultural Dimension

We are exhorted by John Paul II in *Vita Consecrata* that the formation of the cultural dimension be based upon a solid theological training, which provides the means for wise discernment, which involves continual updating and special interest in the different areas to which each charism is directed (VC 71). This approach will assure that consecrated persons keep themselves as intellectually open and adaptable as possible, so that the apostolate will be envisaged and carried out according to the needs of one's own time and circumstances and making use of the means provided by cultural progress.

It should be remembered that, as far as the cultural aspects of society are concerned, the society in which we live is marked by

⁴¹ Cf. J. CASTELLANO, "The Founders Today. A Gift and a Challenge for Our Time," in J. COTTON (Ed.), *Growing Together in Christ. Personal Development in the Religious Life* (New City: Dublin 1991), p. 19.

⁴² Cf. J. GIALLANZA, "Continuing Formation. Perspectives from *Vita Consecrata*," in *Review for Religious* 66 (1997) 5, p. 474.

a tension between secularism and an authentic life of faith. This tension could take different forms and it requires a multifaceted approach to overcome them. Among the challenges that this secularized society presents, and which could be cause for many to abandon their religious vocation, we could list mediocrity, indifference, the temptation of efficiency and activism at the risk of fidelity to the Gospel values and eventually to the weakening or even the loss of spiritual motivation.

Another challenge of contemporary culture is the individualistic tendency in modern culture and the narcissistic inclination of postmodern culture, which could erode the communion of brotherly love in religious communities. For this purpose, religious are called to awareness and to convert these moments of difficulty and challenge into moments of grace and spiritual growth. This is possible by an effort to rediscover the true meaning of the religious values of fraternal love in community, as against the individualistic propensities of culture. The rediscovery of the meaning and quality of fraternal love in communities is realized in the events of everyday life in community. Constancy and fidelity in practicing the evangelical vows and brotherly love in the context of the community and dedication to the mission in the apostolate are guarantees of this rediscovery.

7. The Content of Ongoing Formation

It is difficult to refer to the content of ongoing formation mainly because ongoing formation is not to be understood only in terms of an intellectual content that is to be transmitted. Again, one should not lose sight of the fact that this examination has a lifelong character, which has been constantly echoed and reechoed in various ecclesial documents.

Acquiring information and updating this information regularly is fundamental in the life of the religious, especially in this modern world, which is characterized by an avalanche of information and knowledge. The religious who is not updated with this information is left behind and isolated in this contemporary world. Participation in seminars, courses and classes help make religious alert to the social and cultural challenges and help them to be ready to face them.

Furthermore ongoing formation touches each and every dimension of the religious, and, in this sense, the content should refer to all the dimensions of the human person. Thus, content is viewed as something that is all comprising, because it should accompany every stage and every moment of the life of the religious. In this sense, we could refer to content as rooting one's life in the

Paschal Mystery, the foundation and basis of consecrated life, personal maturity seen in one's attitudes, the stability of values and professional qualification.

7.1. The Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Mystery is the most basic aspect in the life of a religious, and it should be, so to say, the heart of the program of ongoing formation, because the Paschal Mystery is the font of life and maturity of religious.⁴³ It is not merely an intellectual content, but the spiritual and real foundation on which the new person is formed. The life of a religious is centered on Jesus, because the religious shares in the same mission that Christ Himself came to fulfill; namely, to build up the Kingdom of God, and thus the religious represents Christ in and through the community and acts in the name of Christ.

The meaning of religious life and the essence of the spirituality of religious life are both connected with this intimate union that one should have with Christ. According to the depth of intimacy that the religious is able to develop with Christ, the personality of that religious will also become more in accordance with the personality of Christ, and, thereby, acquire the goals of the consecrated vocation and the spirituality of religious life. Since Christ is the only and ultimate model of the personality of the consecrated person, this intimacy is the only means to help the religious become like Christ, in his personality, in his attitudes, values and teaching. Such a union is founded in and fostered by the Eucharist.

Through the celebration of the Eucharist, religious participate closely in the Paschal Mystery. It is also through that same celebration that they receive the strength and the help to become intimate with Christ and thus participate with him in his Paschal Mystery. When a religious allows Christ to become the centre of his/her life, not only will that religious person's lifestyle change, but that person will also be ready, like Christ, to give his/her life for others through service in apostolate and ministry. Religious formation, and particularly religious ongoing formation, is an itinerary of change and conversion towards perfection in charity. It is a journey that lasts the whole of one's life and will be completed only in the final consummation of life.⁴⁴

⁴³ Cf. A. PARDILLA, "Biblical Aspects of Formation in Religious Life," in *International Union of Superiors General* (1997) 96, p. 38.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. BEGHETTO, *Crescere insieme in Cristo. La formazione permanente del religioso* (Città Nuova: Rome 1989), p. 79.

It is in the paschal event that the new person is born by the religious consecration, and again the growth to fullness of that new person also takes place in the continual participation of the celebration of that paschal event. Just as Christ's passion, death, resurrection, ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit are the central events of the Christian reality, so also, in the life of the religious, these same events, namely, the Paschal Mystery, have a central position and they give meaning and vitality to the religious.

7.2. Personal Maturity

Personal maturity cannot be understood, nor described, in objective terms, as though it were some kind of a goal that all consecrated persons are expected to acquire or reach. Since each one is unique and has particular experiences and since also each one has a specific context, the arrival point of maturity would obviously be different for each one. This term, "personal maturity," could be better understood as the full development of one's potentiality, a control of emotions, a realistic understanding and assessment of self, an ability to form interpersonal relationships, the capacity to resolve problems and a pragmatic self-confidence. In relationship with others, a mature person is open to criticism, ready to receive observations from others and willing to be corrected by others. The mature person is also able to make decisions with a sense of responsibility.⁴⁵

Personal maturity is not acquired in a day, but it takes time and effort. First of all, one has to be conscious of the need to become mature, and one should so treasure this goal that no suffering, nor conflicts, nor problems should be able to thwart that desire. Secondly, maturity cannot be a lopsided growth, but should touch the whole person — intellectual, spiritual, human —, namely, it should be an integral growth. Thirdly, it is essential that growth to maturity be holistic in order to guarantee the genuine growth of the individual. Finally, the principle of graduality, namely, steadiness and constancy, should also accompany growth to maturity.⁴⁶

Growth in personal maturity involves also change in attitude, which, in the case of the consecrated person, means growing up to acquire the attitude of Christ (*Vita Consecrata* 69). Attitude, which is central to a person and is deeply ingrained in the individual, refers to

⁴⁵ Cf. I. PUTHIADAM, *Religious and Maturity* (Asian Trading Corporation: Bangalore 1989), p. 135.

⁴⁶ Cf. R.A. COUTURE, "Facing the Challenge of Continuing Education," in *Review for Religious* 32 (1973) 6, p. 1333.

the way one perceives a particular situation and which urges one to behave in a specific way. Because of a deeply ingrained characteristic of attitude, a change in attitude would involve a threefold action: 1. it first consists in letting go of the old outlook and old behavior; 2. it then looks out for a new frame of reference, new knowledge and new behavior models; and 3. it finally consists in establishing this newly acquired outlook and behavior in such a way that this new attitude becomes a permanent part of the person's functional capacity.

7.3. Stability of Values

For an individual, values refer to those choices in life that one treasures and are considered important within the frame of reference of the goals one expects to achieve in life; hence, they are of fundamental importance in one's life.⁴⁷ Values could be long term values (or terminal values), because they propose a life ideal and the purpose of one's existence; or, they could be instrumental values, in so far as they serve as strategies or ways of behavior in order to achieve these terminal values.⁴⁸ In this sense, the "imitation of Christ" is for a consecrated person a terminal value; whereas the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, as also fraternal love in community and the apostolate are instrumental values, because they are means that help the professed person to achieve that terminal value.

Vita Consecrata broadens this terminal value and says that the values of consecrated life and the goal towards which consecrated persons strive are the imitation of Christ and union with God (n. 2). The means and the tools to achieve these values are more specifically mentioned. They are charity as a sign of liberty of heart to better serve others and to be available for the Kingdom, obedience to the divine plan as an expression and means of the imitation of Christ, and poverty as a fruit of love for perfection and communion with the poor. To wish to lose oneself for the sake of the Kingdom is an authentic realization of the vocational values which allow the religious to realize their full potential.

With regard to the stability of values, it is required that the individual, in growing to maturity, should be able to internalize these values, so that they become stable and established in the individual. Thus the individual should move from an intellectual knowledge

⁴⁷ Cf. B. GOYA, *Bisogni e valori, consistenze e inconsistenze vocazionali* (UPS: Rome 2000), [unpublished], p. 9.

⁴⁸ Cf. L. RULLA, *Antropologia della vocazione cristiana. 1. Basi interdisciplinari* (Piemme: Casale Monferrato 1985), p. 338.

of these values, and then pass over through a mere emotional acceptance of these values, and arrive finally to putting them into practice, or living them out and acting according to those values. This would be an important task in continuing and ongoing formation of the religious.

A life that is clearly marked by correct values is important, because they provide motivation for vocation and the building up of the character of the person. Internalizing values is neither easy nor spontaneous, and the acquisition of values usually requires the following four stages: 1. have sufficient knowledge of the value, 2. experience that value by putting it into practice, 3. reflect upon the value to appreciate its effects, and 4. develop an attitude by which one lives according to that value.⁴⁹ As such, it is clear that the process of acquisition of values calls into play all the human faculties: cognitive, emotional and operational. Not only should the learner be enabled to know the right and the good, but also feel the appropriate emotions, concerns and commitment, and likewise exercise the will to do the right thing.

Through constant value learning and acquisition, the consecrated person becomes more and more like Christ, which is also the goal of religious consecration. Only when one becomes mature can one understand the importance of the stability of these values in life. Thus the acquisition and stability of the right values help the consecrated person to become a more authentic religious.

7.4. Professional Qualification

Acquiring professional skills and competence is absolutely essential in the maturity not only of lay persons, but it is particularly so in the case of consecrated persons. Living one's consecrated life includes, as well, living the professional aspect of one's life whether for service in the apostolate, or for service in the community. This professional aspect of a consecrated person begins with the selection of one's professional career, which should normally be done in accordance with one's personal interests, ideas, values, meaning of life, and, of course, capability. This is then followed by the whole process of becoming truly professional in that aspect. When that happens, one is in the process of becoming a more mature person.

The responsibility of qualifying one's professional competence includes and comprises all that any professional career would

⁴⁹ Cf. H. CASTELLINO, "Paths to Value Education," in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 66 (2002) 4, p. 280.

demand. One needs to find the opportunities for study and training, and also take the necessary initiative in professionalizing those services, so that one can render a qualified function both in the community as well as in the apostolate. This would obviously also involve striving to become better and more competent, to take the necessary risks and not to be discouraged by eventual failure. It is in such cases especially that community support is necessary to help the member go ahead with constancy and determination.

The ongoing formation of religious with regard to professional qualification would include a proper level and degree of study, suitable training opportunities and the appropriate means to achieve the competence that is needed for one's professional career. Knowledge is an important component in professional qualification. Together with knowledge there is also the vast area of exercise and practice, which are important to acquire expertise and competence.

Developing competence in one's professional life cannot be limited only to periods of study and training, but, as in every career and profession, it should be extended to include the whole of one's life. It is, so to say, as though one's life is like a school, in which there are continuous occasions and opportunities to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, and, by doing all that, to slowly become proficient in that field.⁵⁰

8. Pedagogical Dimension of Ongoing Religious Formation

Every living being has an inner drive towards growth, maturity and self-realization. To grow means to leave behind the security of the present and move into the unknown future. This requires faith, hope and courage to keep ever growing and maturing. Growth is not static and immutable; it is a continuous event, an ongoing process, which is not complete before death.⁵¹ Formative pedagogy bridges the ideal and the praxis with practical situations. Transformation means growth, maturity and conversion and, in the case of religious transformation, it is inspired by Saint Paul's ideal "to be transformed into Christ" (Rom 12:1). Furthermore, all religious are called "to be perfect as my heavenly Father" (Mt 5:48), and only a lifelong dedication to perfection will lead one to transformation.

⁵⁰ Cf. C.O. HOULE, *Continuing Learning in the Profession* (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco 1996), p. 34.

⁵¹ Cf. M. IRAGUI, *Maturity in Religious Life* (Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy: Alway 1972), p. 43.

8.1. Necessary Personal Conditions

Pedagogical action in favor of transformation consists in assisting the subject of ongoing formation to be able to enter into the dynamics of transformation. For this purpose one needs to encourage the individual to acquire and nurture the following conditions.

1. *Open to Growth*: This means a life of total dedication to the truth and, hence, an openness to self-examination and a willingness to be personally challenged. Above all, this will comprise the individual's life of relationships, on the individual level, on the interpersonal level and on the transcendental level. Openness to growth means the process of becoming less defensive and rigid and more creative and open to feelings. The dynamism of life challenges religious to the openness of growth.

2. *Personal Evolution*: The best opportunity for growth is the courage to face change and to take the decisive step to change and to evolve. To evolve is to become, to move from what one is to what one could be. Personal evolution is not easy because it requires an inward journey. It is a response to a call to know oneself and to understand one's relation with the significant persons of one's life, God included. The mature personality evolves a sense of cohesiveness and personal identity of his/her own. Love is the decisive element that makes one evolve, and this love makes one act and react with creativity.

3. *Ready to Restructure*: With all the changes that are taking place in today's high-tech world, everyone is called to accommodate and change and therefore restructure one's life style. Maturity consists in making wise and correct choices and decisions. By personal involvement one discovers how to fashion a dynamic and balanced life in which there is room for solitude and community, work and leisure, autonomy and intimacy, personal transformation and social reform, prayer and play. To restructure life one needs to have a clear vision of what one's life should be like, what one's attitudes should be like and, consequently, with the spirit of adaptability, restructure one's life in accordance with the new situation.

4. *Inner Freedom*: Freedom is one's basic human right, but, in order to assure transformation, one must exercise discernment to be able to recognize the stimulus that calls for change and make the right decision in order to respond in freedom. This requires courage and constancy to act on these decisions freely. Responsibility is another necessary quality in order to exercise inner freedom. Thus this inner freedom implies honesty, courage, transparency, authenticity, maturity and responsibility.

8.2. Necessary Spiritual Conditions

In order to provide pedagogical help for spiritual transformation in ongoing formation, one should also facilitate the presence of some spiritual attitudes and conditions. These regard some very important inner qualities and functions that should be present in the subject.

1. *Unconditional Self-Acceptance*: When this condition is present the road is opened to growth and transformation. The individual should be available to reflect on personal experience through the stages of internalizing, learning and growing in awareness of one's needs and values. When this is present, one is able to achieve a personal transformation into Christ. With self-acceptance one is able to achieve self-integration, and this self-integration liberates that energy which enables one to carry out the actions that implement a re-oriented striving towards life goals.

2. *Docility to the Holy Spirit*: This condition contributes to the knowledge of self, God and the world. Docility to the Spirit is the ability to discern the voice of the Spirit and be led by that voice. The voice of the Spirit may appear at times to be silent, but its message is of great importance in one's life. The inner voice invites one to follow as it leads toward a sense of purpose and meaning. Rational thinking alone does not work, hence, the need for faith and honesty. These will remove egotism, prevent inner conflict and lead to peace of mind.

3. *Identification with Christ*: The principal objective of religious life is this identification with the attitude of Christ in proceeding to the Father. It must be a person-to-person relationship if one wishes to enter into the mystery of Christ's life, passion, death and resurrection and work towards living it interiorly and exteriorly. Identification with Christ and a maturing of relationship with him take place mainly through faithful exercise of the evangelical counsels. Prayer and contemplation are also helpful in obtaining this goal of religious life — identification with Christ.

4. *Intimacy with Christ*: It is the experience of closeness or union between two persons and is the fruit of a long-term relationship. As one grows in intimacy with Christ, there is also a growth in grace, a surrender to the action of the Holy Spirit and growth in likeness of Jesus. For a worthwhile intimacy, the consecrated person needs to have a clear religious identity.

9. The Institute's Role in Ongoing Religious Formation

In my opinion, the best way to conclude this intervention would be in terms of seeing how, on the practical level, a religious institute can help the ongoing formation of its members. This Formation Meeting, with regard to confreres in difficulty held at the international level, in my opinion, is already a clear indication of the seriousness you give to this issue. As for me, I wish to conclude this presentation, by giving some general and practical suggestions for ongoing religious formation. There is no doubt that you, participants of this meeting, are in a better position to be more specific and concrete in your formation planning and decision-making.

9.1. Formation Plan of the Institute

To guarantee the full participation of the consecrated person in ongoing formation, the institute should formulate and make known to the members the *Ratio institutionis*, which should contain a precise and systematic description of its plan of formation. This *ratio* should comprise the comprehensive formation design in all its details so that the members get a complete picture of their life. The *ratio* should describe in ample particulars the qualities that the members should have, making reference to the different dimensions — human, spiritual, charismatic, apostolic, and cultural. These qualities will be the working tools to help, especially, the middle-aged and senior confreres attend to and plan their ongoing transformation.

9.2. Capable and Trained Formators

Members should also be made aware that one cannot be over-confident and live in self-sufficient isolation; rather they should be convinced that no one can be so secure and committed that he/she does not need to give careful attention to making specific and positive efforts to persevere in his/her vocation in faithfulness. Hence, the institute should identify the profile and the role of formators at different stages of one's life, but in a particular way in the initial stages of formation. These formators should have the necessary training and regular updating to be able to accompany the members in their efforts to identify their lives with Christ and acquire an intimacy with him.

9.3. Provide Formative Moments

Updated and qualified information is very important, so that one does not get stagnated about the demands of the consecrated vocation. Hence there should be occasions like seminars, conferences and study sessions which provide ample and updated input on various topics: biblical, liturgical, spiritual, charismatic, psychological and apostolic. These sessions will arm the members and make them better disposed to use the experiences of their daily lives, both in the community and in their apostolate. Such special moments will also help them to proceed with their continuing religious formation and respond to their religious call with psychological and spiritual transformation and thus move ahead towards fullness in their consecration.

9.4. The Role of the Religious Institute

The local, provincial and international communities also have an important duty and service for the ongoing religious formation of their members, in order to foster in them the desire to be continuously transformed and be better disposed to conform their lives to that of Christ. Each of the communities (local, provincial and international), in its own way has a very important role to play in this regard by careful planning and execution. They too share in the responsibility of the ongoing religious formation of their members. This is true in a particular way for local communities in so far as they have daily occasions to accompany their confreres/sisters in their continuing formation.

9.5. The Role of Prayer

Through one's participation in prayer, personal and communitarian, purification can be achieved, and thus an inner transformation, a *metanoia*, the basis for ongoing formation. The general attitude to prayer would include one's awareness of the presence of God, and a general availability, response and generosity to his unconditional love. At specific and regular moments of prayer, the Word of God should have a primary place and one should be inclined to listen to God's Word, meditate on it and be generous to respond to it as the Spirit inspires. Occasions of *lectio divina* and participation in it will help the process of transformation. Regular meditation and contemplation also deepen the possibility to be in contact with the divine and offer an occasion for self-knowledge and growth. For this purpose, one's personal life and the community timetable should

be so organized as to foster total availability to personal and to community prayer. This would include also the liturgy, with a particular and central place given to the celebration of the Eucharist, which should not be just a ritual and a duty. The celebration of the Eucharist develops personal intimacy with Jesus. The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is also a powerful means for personal self-searching with a call to conversion.

When consecrated persons accept the occasions to achieve the goal of their religious call and life, they will be more conformed to Christ and will be able to deepen a close intimacy with him. In this way they are engaged in a lifelong ongoing formation. They will be always in the spirit of the newness of their religious call. Every effort on their part to imitate the life of Jesus will contribute directly to keep themselves faithful to him. With the awareness of the constant need for conversion and transformation, they will always be open to the richness of the promptings of the Spirit, will benefit from the various helps that are offered, and thus will be engaged in the process of transformation and continuing formation. They will likewise be strengthened to be always faithful to God's call, and no difficulty will be so strong that they cannot overcome it.

Rome, January 2007

2007 ANNUAL STATISTICS – CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

M I N I S T R I E S

Number of conferrers involved in the ministries listed below. Each conferrere is counted only once, considered under his principal ministry, as of 31 December 2007.

M I N I S T R Y	BISHOPS	PRIESTS	DEACONS	BROTHERS	STUDENTS
1. Parish (popular) Missions to the faithful		98		3	1
2. Missionary parishes or districts	2	263	13	7	1
3. Parishes		839	25	25	4
4. Pilgrimage sanctuaries		45		1	
5. Seminaries and clerical formation		117			7
6. Formation of our own exclusively	1	156	4	3	1
7. Missions Ad Gentes	2	125		5	1
8. Daughters of Charity (Director, chaplain)		139			
9. Schools (primary, secondary, superior, professional)		186	1	12	3
10. Social Communications (publications, radio, television)		23		1	
11. Special studies		93	9	3	22
12. Chaplains: military, immigrants, hospital, associations		122		3	
13. Chaplains: Vincentian Lay Groups		69	1	1	
14. Direct Service of the Poor		39	2	10	
15. Manual work		2		31	
16. Administration		132		9	
17. Retired, ill, convalescing	4	304	1	30	
18. Other	23	95	4	17	1
19. Absence from the Congregation		195	8		2
T O T A L	32	3042	68	161	43

Mexico	21	1	91	3		4	1	100	13	1			14			8			8	
Peru	12	1	53		1		55	11					11	21			8		29	
Puerto Rico	15		55	5	4	1	65	11					11	13		9	3		25	
USA - Eastern	24		145	3	10	1	159	1					1				5		5	
USA - Midwest	9		102		17	1	120	6					6				8		8	
USA - New England	7		26	1		1	28						0						0	
USA - Southern	4		16		1	1	18	2					2						0	
USA - West	7		29			2	31						0						0	
Venezuela	12		50	2			3	55		1			1	8					8	
ASIA	62	4	403	5	0	14	9	435	199	2	0	0	201	33	2	108	0	26	1	170
China	4		30	1		1		32					0				3			3
Indonesia	11		85			1	9	95	38	2			40				5	1		6
North India	12	1	72	3		3		79	41				41			62				62
South India	12		80			3		83	104				104			46				46
Orient	8	2	35			1		38	2				2	3	2					5
Philippines	15	1	101	1		5		108	14				14	30			18			48
EUROPE	217	11	1281	22	4	66	11	1395	75	3	0	0	78	31	1	4	0	25	2	63
Austria	5		16			2		18	1				1							0
Belgium	3		11					11					0							0
France - Paris	21		138	13		10	2	163	21	1			22					22	1	23
France - Toulouse	11		53	2		7		62	2	1			3	1	1					2
Germany	3		15			2	1	18	2				2							0
Holland	3		44					44					0							0
Hungary	3		11				1	12	2				2	1						2

PROVINCES	HOUSES & INCORPORATED MEMBERS BY PROVINCE - 2007							ADMITTED MEMBERS & ASPIRANTS BY PROVINCE - 2007																		
	Houses	Bishops	Priests	Deacons	Permanents	Deacons	Brothers	Students with Vows	ADMITTED MEMBERS					ASPIRANTS												
									CP	CB	P*	PD*	TOTAL	Voc. Grps. AP	AB	AP	AB	Min. Sem. AP	AB	Prep. Year AP	AB	TOTAL				
Ireland	12		66					66							0	2									2	
Italy - Naples	11	2	45		2		2	49							2	5	2									7
Italy - Rome	10	1	45		1		2	49							2											0
Italy - Turin	13		71		2		2	75							0	1										1
Poland	29	3	261	4	5	4	5	277	18	1					19											0
Portugal	11	1	53					54	1	3					1	3										3
Slovakia	7		32	2	4		4	38	7	1					7	1										1
Slovenia	8	2	49		2		2	53	1						1											0
Spain - Barcelona	8	1	41		2		2	44	1						1	4										4
Spain - Madrid	16		107		15	2	15	124	2						2											0
Spain - Salamanca	18		83	1	9		9	93	1						1	5										5
Spain - Zaragoza	19		117		1	2	2	120	4						4	8	2							3		13
SS. Cyril and Methodius	6	1	23					25	8						8											0
OCEANIA	6	0	50	0	1	4	4	55	7	0	0	0	0	7	6	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	10	10	
Australia	6		50		1	4	4	55	7						7	6								4		10
TOTAL	524	32	3042	62	6	161	43	3346	580	14	0	2	596	307	7	236	0	128	7	685	7	685				

CP = Candidates to the Priesthood; CB = Candidates to the Brotherhood; P = Priests; PD = Permanent Deacons; P*/PD* = Priests/Permanent Deacons coming from a diocese or another Institute; AP = Aspirants to the Priesthood; AB = Aspirants to the Brotherhood.



If there are any among us who think that they are in the Mission in order to evangelise the poor and not to look after them, to see to their spiritual but not to their temporal needs, then I have to tell them that we must assist the poor and see that they are helped in every possible way, either by ourselves or by other people.... When we do this we are evangelising by word and by action; it is the most perfect way of acting and this is what Our Lord did.

(SV XII, 87-88)

Chapel of the Provincial House
of the Congregation of the Mission in Slovakia.