

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR

(2-7 March 2009)

Rome, 18 March 2009

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!

I present to you the highlights of our *tempo forte* meeting which was held in Rome 2-7 March. We had as invited guests the Vincentian Solidarity Office team: the outgoing Director Brother Peter Campbell, the new Director Father Miles Heinen and his associate Scott Fina. We also had present the three Visitors of the western region of the United States who presented their ongoing process of reconfiguration. We had a session with the webmaster for Famvin, Father John Freund. Our ongoing formation session was directed by Father Luigi Mezzadri with the theme *The Women Who Helped to Build the Holiness of Saint Vincent*.

1. **The 350th anniversary of the deaths of our founders.** We had a lengthy report given by the coordinator of the International Executive Committee, Father Kapusciak. We reviewed each of the different Commission reports that had been presented at the meeting of the Vincentian Family Leaders held in Madrid. In that meeting it was decided that this year, September 27, 2009, will mark the beginning of a Jubilee Year which will last until September 27, 2010. The Superior General will be writing a letter in May to spell out the details of the Jubilee Year. There are two Celebration committees: one which is preparing a celebration of the Eucharist in the Cathedral of Paris on the eve of the feast of Saint Louise de Marillac and another celebration the following day in the rue du Bac on her feast day; the other is preparing a celebration in Rome in St. Peter's for the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul. More details on both of these celebrations will be forthcoming.

One of the Heritage Committee projects approved was the presentation of twelve themes, one per month, on different topics on Vincentian spirituality. The Projects Committee made a presentation on different projects and the Vincentian Family was

in favor of a microcredit program as a pilot project in Haiti. Each of the councils of the different branches of the Vincentian Family are to give their opinion of this proposed project. As members of the Congregation of the Mission, our Council decided to accept the pilot microcredit project in Haiti that was proposed, a project that will hopefully involve the participation of the whole Vincentian Family throughout the world. The details of the project are to be worked out by the Project Committee itself. Further information will be forthcoming.

The Secretariat Committee proposed a pictorial book on the life of the founders and the presence of the Vincentian Family throughout the world. This project was approved and the contract will be signed. The Secretariat Committee proposed an anniversary window on our Famvin web site. The theme and logo of the anniversary are soon to be determined. We also reviewed the report of the Finance Committee of the 350th anniversary which has approved the budgets of the Commissions that were presented. Thus far the financial support of the 350th anniversary is principally from the General Curia of the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission.

2. Final meeting of the Superior General and his Council with the Visitors of the **western region of the United States** regarding **reconfiguration of the provinces**. We reviewed the activities of the different task forces that have been involved in the process of reconfiguration, seven Commissions altogether. There will be a Convocation and Provincial Assembly in 2010 with the participation of the Superior General. The convocation is 22-24 January and the assembly 25-27 January in San Antonio, Texas. The official name of the new province is the Western Province. The leadership structure consists of the provincial, one full-time assistant provincial and four consultants. The web site for reconfiguration is www.westernprovince.org. The web site for the Western Province will be the same as the current Midwest Province www.vincentian.org. In this same *tempo forte*, the Superior General and his Council named the new provincial of the Western Province, Father Perry Henry who will name his Assistant and then begin the process of consultation for Council members and preparation of the Convocation and Provincial Assembly in January. Perry officially becomes the new Visitor on 25 January 2010; his term will end in June 2013.
3. An exciting development in the **area of the economy** certainly is not the condition in which we find the market these days. As many may know, the Curia funds which depend in a great part on the

market, have been affected as have so many others. But the good news is that we have a new project being initiated with the support of funds provided by a foundation. Father Gouldrick, the Econome General, has put together a Money Management for the Mission project with the hope that once it is in effect it will provide for the preparation of the provincial treasurers in different regions of the worldwide Congregation.

4. We had a visit from the **Vincentian Solidarity Office** team: Father Miles Heinen, the new Director and Mr. Scott Fina, the associate Director. They were joined by Brother Peter Campbell, the founding father, who gave us a brief history of the Vincentian Solidarity Office in the seven years in which he has participated: 1 January 2002 - 31 December 2008. The VSO handled 109 projects; the total in funding, together with the 56 micro project grants, was slightly under \$4 million. Peter gave a breakdown of the percentage of recipients throughout the congregation: 37% of the recipients were from African countries, 26% from Asian countries, 24% from countries in Latin America, 12% from Eastern Europe and slightly less than 1/2% from Oceania. There are a total of 43 provinces, vice provinces and/or international missions that are eligible for the Vincentian Solidarity Funds. Of those 43, 29 have been recipients. Obviously we would like to encourage the other countries from around the Congregation to take advantage of this service that the Congregation is providing in order that they might be better prepared to serve in their respective missions.

The last statistics that Peter shared with us were that 63% of the funds raised went towards apostolates of the Congregation of the Mission, another 35% went towards initial formation and vocation promotion and slightly under 2.5% went to internal provincial needs. Peter made it clear that the Vincentian Solidarity Office is not involved just in capital projects but also helps to promote direct service to the poor emphasizing once again that most of the funding is for our apostolates. In a number of different ways, the Council and I showed our gratitude to Peter for these seven years of service and I want to make this public here in this *tempo forte* circular. Thank you, Peter!

Peter's report was followed by a report submitted by Father Miles Heinen. Since the December *tempo forte* they have accepted seven new Vincentian Solidarity Office projects and two micro project grants. They have been able to find full or partial funding for nine of the VSO projects, many of which were already in process. With this current report we were informed that the funding has

topped \$4 million. Father Miles and Mr. Fina have a number of exciting projects that they are promoting especially now that they are also involved in the aspect of fund raising, since the International Development Office has been combined with the Vincentian Solidarity Office. I am sure that the various provinces or vice provinces as well as the missions and other branches of the Vincentian Family will be hearing from the new Director about ways that they might be able to collaborate in this project that is based on solidarity for the poor in the provinces of the Congregation of the Mission. Once again I encourage you to check out the web page www.famvin.org/vso. If there is ever a need to contact Father Miles Heinen, or any questions, he can be contacted at cmvso@yahoo.com.

5. We received a report from the delegate for the **Vincentian Family**, Father Manuel Ginete. He gave us a summary of the Vincentian Family International Leaders meeting that was held in Madrid, Spain, 30 January - 1 February. The meeting was organized by the Vincentian Family office, but hosted and assisted by the CM province of Madrid and the two DC provinces in Madrid, and by the international secretariat of the JMV. We are grateful to all of them for the tremendous work done and the grand hospitality they extended to all of the 25 participants coming from 11 different branches of the Family. The invited new group was the Brothers of Mercy, represented at this meeting by Brother Vicar General. The agenda was varied and included reports on planning for the 350th anniversary of the deaths of our founders. Also discussed was the 2010 Vincentian Family Youth gathering in Madrid. A committee was formed to start the preparation for this meeting. Yasmine Cajuste, the International President of JMV was asked to convene the group. The theme for St. Vincent's feast this year will be related to the 350th anniversary. Father Ginete also gave us an update on the continental session for Vincentian leaders and advisors on systemic change that took place in the context of the 5th Latin American meeting of the Vincentian Family in Mexico City from 15-21 February. There were 143 participants from 17 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States. The meeting had a double goal, to deepen the leadership of the advisors and moderators of the Vincentian Family as well as to promote systemic change multipliers.

He also reported on the AIC International Assembly that was held immediately after the workshop in Mexico City entitled *Change the World.... We Women Can*. Attending the meeting were 126 mem-

bers and advisors representing 29 countries. The new president of AIC international is Laurence de la Brosse of France taking over for Marina Costa of Italy. A word of congratulation to Marina for all the good work that she has realized, especially uniting AIC with many of the branches of the Vincentian Family. Our prayers for the new international president, Laurence. Father Ginete reports that as a whole, AIC is committed to systemic change. Formation notebooks on systemic change had already been disseminated as early as the middle of 2007. They have also used the systemic change framework in their own organizational structure.

In the coming months Father Ginete will attend the fifth Vincentian Family Gathering in the United States in April which will be held in Detroit, Michigan. He will also participate in the continental session for Vincentian leaders, advisors on systemic change in Brasilia, Brazil in June as well as the same continental session in Yaounde, Cameroon in July and the continental session for Asia in Thailand in November.

6. Meeting with the **web master for famvin.org**. We discussed the relationship of the web page to the Congregation of the Mission and other individual web sites of the Vincentian Family. We discussed the uneven development across the various famvin.org sites as well as funding issues, hoping to reduce reliance on the Curia. We also discussed how to better develop the CM Global web site, clarifying issues about who is responsible for what and the procedures for posting, etc. Additional issues that were discussed were the web site for the General Assembly for 2010, and the web site for the 350th anniversary. I put here, for your information, the addresses of the two web sites that are under the responsibility of the General Curia. They are famvin.org which you can find in English, Spanish and French and cmglobal.org which is also in the three official languages of the Congregation. The second deals more with matters pertaining to the Congregation of the Mission itself.
7. We analyzed reports from the different **Conferences of Visitors**. I want to highlight an item that was discussed from the National Conference of Visitors of the United States. As you know, they have the project of translating the correspondence of St. Vincent de Paul, a project that has been in process for more than 30 years and have produced almost 13 volumes. We were informed that they have a supply of close to 30,000 copies of the different volumes and that demand is down. I take advantage here to do a little publicity at the international level. They are hoping that the

350th anniversary of the deaths of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise will be a good way of promoting this material to help us deepen our Vincentian roots and spirituality. So if there are provinces that are English-speaking or even non-English-speaking, who would desire to purchase these 13 volumes on the correspondence of Saint Vincent de Paul, you are asked to contact the General Curia, attention Father Gregory Gay and/or Father Andy Bellisario, Visitor and Director of the Daughters of Charity of the Western Province at aebcm@att.net, or Sister Marie Poole poolesrm@doc.org or Sister Ann Mary Dougherty doughertysra@doc.org.

8. Following the reports from the Conferences of Visitors we spoke at length about the **international missions** and volunteers for other *mission ad gentes*. The international mission El Alto, Bolivia will be receiving a visit from the Assistant General, Father José Maria Nieto at the end of April and the beginning of May 2009. The international mission of Papua New Guinea has for now a team of four members, the two newest being Father Justin Eke from the Province of Nigeria and the most recent arrival, Father Vladimir Malota from the Province of Poland. They will be joined later this year by a lay volunteer from the MISEVI team in the Philippines, Marlon Padillo. I will be visiting the international mission of Papua New Guinea later this year, in July. We have little information from our mission in the Solomon Islands. Father José Antonio Ubillús, the Assistant for Missions, will be visiting them at the beginning of July. At this *tempo forte* we received correspondence from nine confreres desiring to volunteer for *mission ad gentes*; one of those volunteers is already in place, three are awaiting assignments and the rest have been asked to wait for placement in the not too distant future.
9. The final point is that at the next **convocation of the Union of Superiors General** I will be represented by the Vicar General, Josef Kapusciak who will be accompanied by José Maria Nieto. The theme to be discussed will be *Geographic and Cultural Changes in the Institutes of Consecrated Life.... Challenges and Prospects*. The Congregation needs to find new models because consecrated life is becoming increasingly multicultural in relation to its surrounding society. The government of religious institutes searches for new ways to promote not only cultural balance but unity and communion. This situation produces new problems for inculturating the charism and for formation. I hope that I will have something to report back to you regarding this very interesting and necessary topic.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a good Lenten experience, what remains of it, and a joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection. May each of you as individuals, as local communities, and as provinces and vice provinces be renewed in the spirit of the resurrected Lord Jesus.

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 style with a large initial "G" and a long, sweeping underline.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General