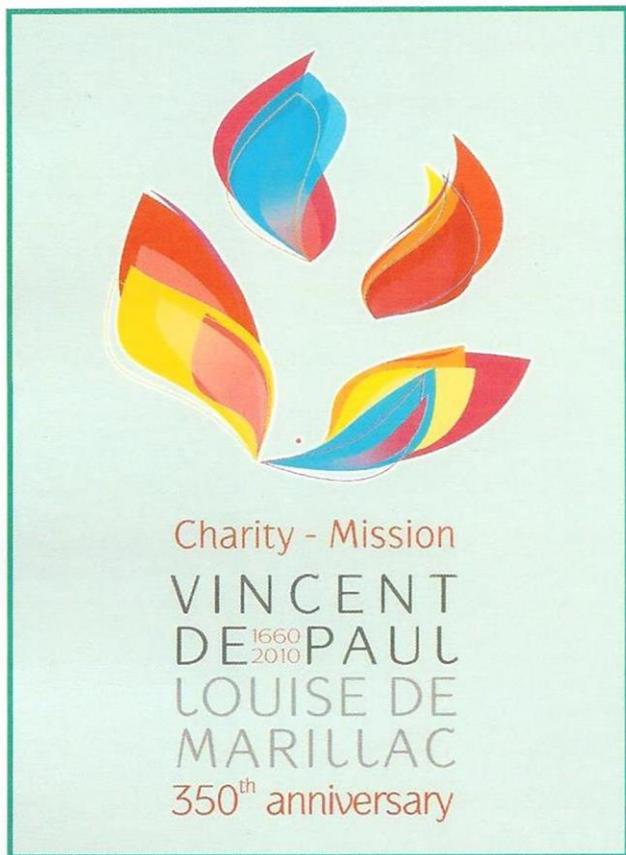


VINCENTIANA

53th Year - N. 1/2

January-April 2009



SIEV Colloquium

Paris, 4-15 February 2008

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
GENERAL CURIA

GENERAL CURIA

SYSTEMIC CHANGE AWARD

Rome, 25 January 2009

To all 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!

As mentioned in my circular for our December *tempo forte* meeting, there were eight applications presented for the Systemic Change Award. From these eight, we selected three that we considered met the criteria for Systemic Change. Let me repeat briefly the questions each applicant was asked to respond to for this award.

- Explain briefly how the project involves the poor themselves.
- Identify the holistic vision of the plan.
- Identify any particular emphasis the project gives to self-help and self-sustaining programs.
- How does the project foster transparency; for example, promoting good money management and maintaining careful controls over the use of assets.
- How does the project construct a shared vision among a diverse range of people: the poor themselves, interested individuals, donors, churches, governments and NGOs, the private sector.

Obviously every project can not fulfill ideally all of these criteria, but we felt that the ones selected have done a fine job and each is a project that will help the poor help themselves.

PROVINCE OF BARCELONA

Environmental Protection of the Lands of the Coffee Producing Workers in Honduras

The first award goes to the Province of Barcelona with its mission San Pedro Sula in Honduras. The confreres hope to achieve:

1. a bettering of the economic social and cultural conditions of the country people in the mountain areas surrounding San Pedro Sula;
2. defense of the right to a healthy environment;
3. leadership of the country people in their social transformation;
4. promotion of laws which respect the environment, thus protecting the land and the health of the people.

The principal component of the project is involving the participation of the people of the area in planning, executing, monitoring and evaluating the project. The people involved in this project are the farmers themselves, delegates of the different Christian communities, promoters of health, principally women, and the land and environment pastoral commissions who have done an analysis of the environment with regard to water treatment.

The culture of the country people includes a cosmic vision of the earth closely related to their own experience of God as creator. The project helps the people understand the environment and its importance for harmonious living among all peoples with creation. The area in which the project is being realized is a reserved area which is subject to a plan for environmental control. Two public institutions work in close conjunction with this project: the Division of Water and the Honduran Cooperative for Development of Forests.

The vision of the project is to help to raise the environmental consciousness of the country people by giving them tools to participate in the elaboration and practice of environmental controls that public sectors are trying to develop. The overall goal of the project is to help the people to better the quality of water in their own homes because improving the quality of water improves the quality of life. The area of Merendon where the coffee cooperative exists, provides the drinking water for San Pedro Sula, a major city in Honduras. So the benefits of the project are widespread. The project involves the participation of those who live in the five parishes in Merendon, government officials, the Church and various land and environment agencies. All those involved in the project belong to a coffee cooperative, one of whose statutes is that five

percent of the capital must be used for a social fund, for the development of the communities.

The project promotes transparency through a team of the cooperative itself with responsibility to oversee and evaluate the activities of the project. The accounting process is under the responsibility of the cooperative and a report is given to the general assembly regularly. An audit is provided by the social pastoral of the parish.

VICE PROVINCE OF COSTA RICA

A Center for Development and Day Care – Saint Vincent de Paul

What the confreres hope to accomplish in this project is to give a human and Christian formation to the most vulnerable, that is to children, single mothers, sick and elderly. Its primary objective is the integral human promotion.

The program involves the poor through:

1. meetings in order that together priorities might be concretized;
2. accomplishing a sense of belonging on the part of the poor involving them in the project according to their own abilities and possibilities:
 - a) children at special risk: to help them in the area of education that is integrated with human and Christian guidance in a healthy and safe environment for recreation
 - b) single mothers: enabling them for work possibilities by giving them psychological support, accompaniment, and some counseling regarding the creation of their own micro businesses
 - c) the sick: to assist with medical assistance, medicine and the improvement of their living conditions
 - d) elderly: to accompany them, especially those who are physically impaired and bedridden and to provide entertainment for them.

Self-help and self sustainment are accomplished by:

- a) giving the children in the day care the opportunity for human and Christian formation;
- b) providing single mothers with the opportunity to get work;
- c) providing workshops on drug and alcohol prevention, vocational workshops and psychological workshops.

The project promotes transparency by having monthly reports of all monies received and spent assuring that the funds will be used exclusively for the project for which they were destined. The books will be reviewed by a public accountant and will be supervised by an incorporated member of the Congregation.

The project contributes to a shared vision by meeting with other Christian groups in order to channel financial assistance and coordinate collaboration. Contacts will be made with the local government and there will be coordination with the National Learning Institute. There will be motivation of and commitment by private businesses in the promotion and sustainment of the project. The project promoters will contact television and local radio stations. Finally, other activities will be done in conjunction with the Red Cross of Costa Rica, the youth social pastoral of the diocese, and the Christian Family Movement.

PROVINCE OF IRELAND

Becoming Neighbor

The confreres hope to provide a welcoming, high quality, transitional housing program to people who are homeless to enable them to move to and successfully remain in independent living.

The project involves the poor. The Vincentian Housing Project offers each person an individual apartment and an eighteen month program to enable them to live independently. Before entering the program they attend three interviews outlining what the program entails. This enables them to understand what is being offered and to choose if they wish to engage in the process of change.

The holistic vision of the plan is the concept of becoming neighbor. It is based on the gospel story of the Good Samaritan. The insight is that when the Samaritan reaches out to the traveler who had been beaten up he, at that moment, became neighbor to the man. The Project is about us as individuals and as a society becoming neighbor to the homeless person and encourages the homeless person to become neighbor once again. It incorporates a holistic response to needs as identified by the homeless person with their key workers.

1. On entering the program each person is assigned a key worker who enables them to outline their vision for the future, to set goals and to plan their own pathway to the future.
2. With their key worker they are supported in outlining their holistic needs. These include accommodation, health, educ-

ation, employment, spiritual needs, personal budgeting, psychological, relationships and identifying support to overcome their addictions.

The project gives emphasis to self-help and self-sustainment by:

1. Working in partnership with both the statutory and voluntary agencies to help identify the cause of homelessness and to design plans to eradicate it. This involves listening to the homeless person and the workers. Our vision for 2010 is that no one will have to sleep on the streets because of lack of facilities.
2. Initiating conversions with staff and volunteers to think about the meaning of their work.
3. Staff volunteers and the homeless being invited to participate in the mission and values workshops of the Vincentian Housing Partnership.
4. Facilitating learning with people of all faiths and those without faith in a search for new ways of becoming neighbor.

Transparency is fostered by submitting the budget to the board of management before the beginning of each year, having an external audit, and monitoring the finances at each board meeting.

The project constructs a shared vision because it is a partnership consisting of the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We are members of the Homeless Agency Network. We have a strong Volunteer network, and we work closely with DePaul Trust, another branch of the Vincentian Family. We also work closely with the statutory agencies and are a member of the Vincentian Justice Partnership.

These summaries of the winners of the Systemic Change Award I share with all members of the Congregation of the Mission to stimulate your own creativity to respond to the urgent needs of the poor through systemic change which is a truly concrete way to live out the gift of God's love which motivates us to serve and evangelize the poor.

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

ASH WEDNESDAY

Rome, 25 February 2009

To the members of the Vincentian Family

Dear brothers and sisters,

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

Make room in my inn.
Open wider my heart.
My God is coming
as the lonely person,
as the forgotten one,
the hopeless prisoner,
as the unwanted child,
the homeless IDP¹
as the AIDS sufferer
the unloved outcast.
Lord, I see you coming.
Welcome, Lord, come in.
Your room is ready.

Sister CATHERINE MADIGAN, D.C.

Since having written my Advent letter and promising to follow up in my Lenten letter on some points mentioned there, I have received many reflections concerning those for whom there was no room. Many wrote lists of different examples such as the unemployed, the immigrants, those of different culture, language, color of skin. We live in a world full of prejudices. Each and every one of us, perhaps, has our own that we need to look into, to confront and to heal.

We all, one way or another, exclude others, perhaps even those with whom we live, in our communities and associations. We may look at others and consider them to be strange just because they think differently. Perhaps they are not well kept, maybe they drink

¹ Internally Displaced Person.

too much, perhaps they are too loud or too quiet. We have many excuses just to ignore them.

With the most recent economic crisis that has affected the world, an accentuated selfishness, which is at the bottom of the crisis itself from a moral standpoint, can provoke even among the best of people of good will attitudes to protect what is my own, to pull back on my or our generosity to others. We do so as individuals, as a family, as an association or as a community. The consequence is that those who most suffer, are the poorest of the poor. They only experience a greater abandonment as others pull away from them and draw more into themselves.

Sometimes we may find ourselves saying there is just not enough to go around. And we respond by saying I am sorry, or we are sorry. I find myself saying the same thing to many legitimate requests for help for those who live in poverty.

In this Lenten season let us ask ourselves if perhaps we act too quickly to protect ourselves and our own interests. We need to reflect once again, especially in this time of repentance, on that which helps us to feel our need as well as our neediness. In other words we need to reflect on our willingness to sacrifice, or what we call in our own Vincentian tradition, the virtue of mortification. The root of the word mortification is to die to oneself, to sacrifice, to put the other first. It requires taking into consideration the needs and concerns of others. The other side of mortification is selfishness, a concern for one's own well-being, looking out for one's own personal interests. These attitudes dominate the world in which we live today.

As we practice the art of mortification, it is an opportunity for us, as we say, to tighten our belts, to live more simply in order that those who are usually on the lower side of the scale will feel less the effects of the crisis than usual. We are asked to reverse the scenario, so that it be us and not them who feel the suffering. Saint Vincent practiced this continually when he referred to the poor as our lords and masters. He did not speak of a relationship of equals, but he went to the other extreme in order to help create a more balanced relationship.

Sometimes we are slow to understand what it is that Saint Vincent wants to teach us about putting the poor ahead of ourselves. Rather than drawing in on ourselves in these times of crisis, enveloped in our own selfish attitudes, let this time of Lent be a time of solidarity.

As we read in the gospels during Lent, Jesus is gradually rejected and eventually abandoned just as he and his parents were the day he was born. He experienced utter abandonment on the summit of the cross. Only a few faithful remained; "Standing by the cross of Jesus

were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala" (Jn. 19:25) and John. Each of them, Mary, Mary Magdalen and John had something in common, an unconditional love of Jesus. Mary, as only a mother could have; Mary Magdalen, a repentant sinner who hit bottom and it was true love that lifted her up, the unconditional love of Jesus that transformed her life; and John, the love of a true friend and faithful disciple.

Somehow or another Jesus, in his experience of abandonment "Why have you abandoned me" (Mt. 27:46) as he cried out from the cross, later experienced the intimate presence of his Father filling him with new life in and through the resurrection. He is filled with the healing power of his Father, given new life in order that others might have life. Jesus empowered his disciples with that same capacity to give new life.

Oftentimes, we look to healing as something extraordinary. We sometimes hope for miracles in order to be made anew. There certainly are extraordinary ways in which God breaks into human history making impossible situations possible with new life and new living. Yet many times when we wait for the extraordinary to happen, we let opportunities for change escape us.

God's healing power is not something that is only extraordinary. It is God's love that heals. When we look to Mark's gospel, the leper says, "If you choose, you can make me clean." And Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leper was healed" (Mk. 1:40-42). Very simple human gestures and actions that come from the heart of Jesus, making a difference in the life of the leper.

It was the power of God's love in the life of Jesus, that healed. Jesus' compassion for him is not something so extraordinary but very ordinary. The love of God makes us one with Jesus in healing, enabling us to be givers of new life.

This year, 2009, the United Nations has declared as the Year of Reconciliation, particularly looking at reconciliation in those countries throughout the world which are war-torn and divided because of many forms violence, strife and poverty. Reconciliation is something that is both civil and spiritual at the same time. One of the consequences of this active reconciliation, being brought together and made whole once again, is the elimination of any sense of others being abandoned or left out. All of us are part of the whole and are invited to live in harmony one with another. Harmony or wholeness is the consequence of the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well as the consequence of dialogs between nations striving for peace in a spirit of good will.

Working for harmony and reconciliation is not an isolated act. It demands a collaborative effort on the part of all peoples. I would hope that all the members of the Vincentian Family would work to be builders of reconciliation, peace and justice in the world in which we live.

As pointed out by Sister Marie Poole (*Collaboration of St. Vincent and St. Louise*, 2008), we can learn a great deal from our founders, Vincent and Louise, who were destined to interrelate and work together in extraordinary harmony. Vincent and Louise would develop a spirit of equality encompassing complementarity and communion, a mutuality that went far beyond simple collaboration. The fire that was enkindled in the relationship between them and their love and service of those who live in poverty lives on today in the worldwide Vincentian Family. We, as family, are encouraged to live in their wisdom and to see and learn from their ability to build bridges between the classes of society, and to include in decision-making and responsibility those with whom and for whom we minister.

This encapsulizes what we are hoping to accomplish as we deepen our own knowledge of systemic change, a contemporary way of living our Vincentian spirituality today, walking with hope among those who live in poverty.

We, as a Vincentian Family, are called as Vincent and Louise were to recognize and accept our talents as well as our limitations and our capacity to work independently yet jointly. Just as there was never any competition between Vincent and Louise, God forbid that there will ever be any competition between any of the branches of the Vincentian Family. Despite our differences, just as they had theirs, let us be consumed by the love of God and our love of the impoverished. They are our focus. God is the author of all that we do, and we do what we do together in solidarity with those who are poor. As Vincent and Louise were able to count on one another in all circumstances, especially in difficult moments, let that be a lesson for us, especially as we live in these trying times of social, political, economic and religious unrest.

As we walk together through this Lenten season, let us do so in the light of the example of our Founders who stand as beacons of true collaboration and partnership in ministry, a model for all of us in every walk of life.

Lent, my brothers and sisters, is a time of abandonment, a time of mortification, a time of reconciliation, a time of collaboration and solidarity. Lent is a time of harmony and peace. It is a time of new life. It is a time of movement from death to life, a time of moving out of oneself and moving towards the other, and the Other.

May the example and intercession of Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalen and John enable us to remain steadfast and faithful at the foot of the cross united in our own unconditional love of Him who first loved us. Let it be the love of Christ crucified that urges us.

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 long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

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

FEATURE

SIEV Colloquium for Promoting Vincentian Studies and Research

Paris, 4-15 February 2008

Presentation

by Alexander Jernej, C.M.

In September 2006, the SIEV team proposed to the General Council to organize a research Colloquium on local Vincentian History. With this Colloquium, we wanted to stimulate and share historical studies, which deal with the local history of the CM and the Vincentian Family. In addition, in a more general sense, following on the previous session of 2004, a young generation of Vincentian researchers should be fostered.

With a letter to all Visitors in November 2006, we invited confreres and others who have already prepared some work on local Vincentian history to participate in this session. It was required that each participant comes with some work already in progress: i.e. an essay, a bibliography or a chronology. It was envisaged that this would be a 10-day intensive course, open to those working in the field or intending to develop their skills in this arena.

Besides this letter, we phoned individual Visitors and confreres and finally we had 11 confreres who wanted to participate, including myself.

The Colloquium was to take place in Paris in the Maison Mere using the structures of CIF from 4 to 15 February 2008. The concrete objectives of the colloquium were as follows:

- Collaborate with the provinces in the field of Vincentian investigation,

- Animate new Vincentian researchers by offering them the experiences of experts,
- Propose an adequate methodology for historical investigation.

In two SIEV meetings in 2007, the exact program of the Colloquium was developed. We finally called it: *SIEV Colloquium for Promoting Vincentian Studies and Research*. From the 11 participants who had signed up two could not participate due to different problems.

The nine who remained were:

ABEBE TEKELE MARIAM,	Ethiopia
ARMADA FRANCISCUS,	Indonesia
FERNANDEZ MAURICIO ALVARO,	Colombia
JERNEJ ALEXANDER,	Austria
LIPINSKI MICHAL,	Hungary
MAROUN KHALIL,	Orient-Lybanon
O'MALLEY VINCENT,	USA East
RALAHIZAFY PIERRE JEROME,	Madagascar
ZERPA ACOSTA RAYCO,	Saragossa

Alexander Jernej being the SIEV Coordinator opened the Colloquium with an introductory conference to the Colloque and presided in the Eucharist at the end. Hugh O'Donnel, SIEV member and director of CIF moderated the program and Julian Diaz Catalan, member of CIF helped with translations and many other things. There was the part time presence of Elie Delplace, SIEV member and Visitor of Paris, who gave a conference and organized the visits to the French national archives and French national library, and of Julio Suescun, executive secretary of SIEV.

Invited Speakers (experts) were John Rybolt, Claude Lautissier, James Murphy, Bernard Koch, Mitxel Olabuenaga (SIEV), Luigi Mezzadri, Benito Martinez, Jaime Corera and one non-Vincentian, Fr. Bernard Pitaud, Sulpician, who spoke about the French School of Spirituality.

The colloquium worked very well. In the morning sessions, the conferences of the invited experts were followed by discussions. In the afternoon, the participants were invited to present a work they are doing or have finished. The visits to the French national archives and French national library and to the Musee Janseniste opened our horizon of Vincentian research. A lot of new digitalized material for Vincentian research was distributed and we were shown how to use a new archive scanner including new software, which I found especially helpful.

The general evaluations regarding goal, theme, organization, speakers, translation, location and accommodations of the Colloquium were very positive. Some felt a lack of time for dialogue with our passionate Vincentian scholars and some practical work or group work, e.g. in the Archives. All agreed that there should be a Colloquium like this in the next years. Since the General Superior and his Council also supported this idea, the next research Colloquium is planned to take place in 2011.

VINCENTIANA offers in this number the outstanding works that the experts have sent.

*Program of the SIEV Colloquium for promoting
Vincentian studies and research
Paris 2008*

Day	Session	Morning	Afternoon
04/02	1 ^a	Introductions; Setting the Scene (ALEXANDER JERNEJ)	ELIE DELPLACE: History as a source of life
	2 ^a	Introduction of Participants	
05/02	1 ^a	JOHN E. RYBOLT: The CM History Project	2 Presentations
	2 ^a	Vincentian Studies in the English Speaking World	
06/02	1 ^a	JEAN PITEAU: The French School of Spirituality	Visit to Archives Nationales de France – CARAN
	2 ^a		
07/02	1 ^a	Visit to the Bibliothèque National	CLAUDE LAUTISSIER: Vincentian Studies in the French Speaking World
	2 ^a		Visit to Archives of the Maison-mère

Day	Session	Morning	Afternoon
08/02	1 ^a	JAMES H. MURPHY: The Importance of Historical Context	JOHN P. PRAGER: Vincentian Studies in Latin America
	2 ^a		
09/02		BERNARD J. KOCH: A Case Study: Research at Chatillon	Visit to the Musee Janseniste
10/02		Sunday	Sunday
11/02	1 ^a	MIGUEL ÁNGEL OLABUÉNAGA ORNES: <i>Vincentian Historiography</i> in Spain	MIGUEL ÁNGEL OLABUÉNAGA ORNES: Methodology
	2 ^a		
12/02	1 ^a	LUIGI MEZZADRI: Callenges. Vincentian Studies in Italian	2 Presentations
	2 ^a		
13/02	1 ^a	BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS: Thematic History	2 Presentations
	2 ^a		
14/02	1 ^a	JAIME CORERA ANDÍA: Strengths and Weaknesses of Vincentian Studies	2 Presentations
	2 ^a		
15/02	1 ^a	Commitments and Proposals for the future	
	2 ^a	Evaluation	

New Avenues of Research into the History of the Vincentian Idea

by Luigi Mezzadri, C.M.

Each generation feels the need to go back over its footsteps, to get back to the origins and retrace once again the route which brought it to the alterations which we know. History is never done with being written. There are two roads which lead us to the re-writing of history:

- The discovery of new documents;
- New questions being asked.

Spurred on by these two reminders, historical research is never-ending, and keeps pressing on. In a certain sense history is always “revisionist,”¹ in the sense that it is never fully satisfied with the results achieved; it wants to see more, understand more, know more.

To travel through this territory, however, we need to have definite points from which to set out; documents are the necessary starting points. There are written documents, such as letters, sermons, rules, contracts. But there are also other, non-written, documents, which are equally revelatory: seals, pictures, curios, articles of clothing. The cloak and hat of the saint, preserved in Turin, the heart which is in the rue du Bac, are also documents. The portrait kept in the Bibliothèque Mazarin in Paris, published by Maurice Piquard, supposed to be of Vincent, is a document. The same is true with

¹ By this term we mean to describe the position of those historians whose intention is to bring up for discussion the more or less “orthodox” opinions of their colleagues. The revisionist historiography of the French Revolution by Fures has “revised” the positions of classic historiography, namely Jacobin-Marxist, putting forward a totally different view of the revolution. E. Nolte has done the same for Nazism, writing that extermination of the Bolshevik classes preceded racial extermination by the Nazis. Obviously it is not enough just to propound a contradictory and provocative thesis to qualify for the title “revisionist.” May one apply this title to C. Faurisson who has denied the Holocaust?

regard to his pen, the seals, the pulpit in Folleville, the walls of Dax. Le Nain's illustrations are also documents, Callot's engravings, as well as the halls of the château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, or those of the Musée de l'Assistance Publique. A "document" therefore, is anything which throws light on somebody. We might also add that writings by other persons, which fill out the saint's period or personality, are also documents.

So, there is a material history to be known: the galleys, the houses of the Landes, eating habits, medicine, transport. By visiting the Musée de la Marine in Paris one may study the galley, and get some idea of the exhaustion of the rowers, the *comito's* rage, the whiplash of the rain and wind, the problem of the dog days when the sea is dead calm. So, as one peruses these pages of the saint, one gets to understand, and to know more. As foundational books we must, of course, list the saint's *Opera omnia*.² Vincentian dictionaries³ are also useful, as is some introductory volume, for getting to know the saint.⁴

1. *Research into the saint and his thought*

We have a reasonable acquaintance with St Vincent. There are innumerable biographies, ranging from those which are more authoritative to those of more popular appeal. We realise, of course, that Coste⁵ and Román⁶ are not enough. Nothing is ever definitive.⁷

² VINCENT DE PAUL, *Correspondance, entretiens, documents*, ed. P. Coste, 14 vols., Paris 1920-1925: XV, Paris 1970. There are Spanish, Italian and English translations. A new critical edition in Italian is in course of production. The Italian editors have decided on a completely new work. They have started from a revised and corrected French text, incorporating later discoveries. They have entrusted the work of translating to a group of male and female scholars who are competent and motivated. In this matter it is not easy to combine fidelity with modernity. There can be endless discussion on how to translate *Monsieur Vincent*. [**Translator's note:** at this point the author gives much space on how to render certain French names, titles and pronouns into Italian. He makes the point that in a translation extended notes are needed to cover these difficulties].

³ *Diccionario de espiritualidad vicenciana*, Salamanca 1995; *Dizionario storico spirituale vincenziano*, a cura di L. Mezzadri, Roma 2003.

⁴ L. MEZZADRI, *La sete e la sorgente. Iniziazione agli studi vincenziani*, 2 vols., Roma 1992-1993.

⁵ P. COSTE, *Le grand saint du grand siècle: Monsieur Vincent*, 3 vols., Paris 1932.

⁶ J.M. ROMÁN, *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Biografia*, Milano 1986.

⁷ L. MEZZADRI - L. NUOVO, S. *Vincenzo de' Paoli. Pagine scelte*, Roma 1981. L. MEZZADRI, *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Una carità senza frontiere*, Cinisello Balsamo 1986; 2^a ed. 1989. The point of this latter biography was to insert the

The puzzle of the slavery episode is certainly not solved. We need to discover some confirmation that he was a slave. But if he was not, then where was he? The other parts of his story are carefully investigated. We would wish for more details about his investigators and their accounts. Another angle needs to be looked at in depth. Coste has written about the “Great Saint.” But perhaps the “great century” is still insufficiently known. What do we know about the interaction of the saint with movements of popular revolt (*les croquants*)?⁸ Or with politicians? Or with significant reformers? The main thrust of the biography will not change, but we will better understand the significance of certain decisions. This calls for better research in some archives: those of the Vatican, the *Archives Nationales* in Paris, other local archives, important family records and those of religious orders.

His thinking has been quite well sifted. Perhaps there is need for a deepening of certain aspects, such as the question of “the small number of the saved,” matters relating to confession as a sacrament, and general confession. The problem of Mariology has been looked at but not worked through. We could also go along the route of looking at the saint as a listener to the word of God. Christology and ecclesiology have not been gone into with any notable results. Questions about the relationships between charity and justice, poverty and wealth, war and peace, Christianity and Islam, also call for a bit of investigation.

Granted that we should not, and cannot, be mere echoers of the saint, it is clear that we must set ourselves the objective of going beyond the positions adopted by the saint. St Vincent’s theology is the 17th century theology of the Sorbonne. Huge advances have taken

saint into the context of his time. It starts by telling us about the background from which he came, namely a boy from a Gascon farming family who had to make his own way in the world, availing of whatever means presented themselves in his cultural circumstances. The only way to free himself of this was to become a priest, so he started on the road to ordination. The “conversion” is first of all recovery of the sense of priesthood, a man for others. Then comes the turning point of 1617, and the gradual widening of the saint’s activity. In the different chapters the author examines the studies in political, social and religious history which explain the different decisions made. L. MEZZADRI, *S. Vincenzo de’ Paoli. Una vita spesa per gli altri*, Roma 1989. This is a more interior, spiritual, biography, perhaps more compact, but this is because the author wanted to give the reader a sense of the beauty and greatness of an experience not always properly appreciated. L. MEZZADRI, *S. Vincenzo de’ Paoli e il carisma della carità*, Roma 2002. In this work, which is concisely yet clearly written, the author shows us the charisma as a fire, from which the initiative for charity springs out like sparks.

⁸ Y.M. BERCÉ, *Histoire des Croquants*, Paris 1986.

place with regard to matters of Christology, grace, the church, salvation, and sacraments. For each one of these disciplines we need to apply *aggiornamento* to the saint's stance, and in that way avoid becoming echoers of a dead theology.

2. "Espionage" within the congregation

Even a casual observer realizes that the lack of interest in studies about the history of the Congregation, which are few enough,⁹ needs to be probed. Perhaps there has been a plan by those at the top of the Congregation, designed to show only edifying happenings and to conceal those which are less so. The in-fighting about moving the general curia to Rome has always been cleverly kept in the background. The purpose of history is not to "edify" but to "understand," to "carry out some espionage," in order to tease out the causes of certain happenings. It has only recently been understood that there is some point in a history of the Congregation freed from nationalist polemics.¹⁰

⁹ C.-J. LACOUR, *Histoire générale de la Congrégation de la Mission commençant depuis la mort du B. Vincent de Paul et finissant vers l'année 1720...*, Ms in the archives of the general curia, Rome. The printed edition is: *Histoire générale de la Congrégation de la Mission*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 62 (1897) 137-158, 296-329; 63 (1898) 131-161, 312-329, 620-635; 64 (1899) 156-176, 411-430, 509-535; 65 (1900) 290-306, 424-442; 66 (1901) 436-448, 570-580; 67 (1902) 148-154, 269-303, 572-604; A. ALLOU, *Précis de l'histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission depuis la fondation en 1625 jusqu'à la mort de M. Etienne en 1874*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 89 (1924) 575-1026; 90 (1925) 5-223; P. COSTE, *La Congrégation de la Mission dite de Saint-Lazare*, Paris 1927; E. ROBERT, *Histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 95 (1930) 686-696; 96 (1931) 24-32, 294-319, 457-475, 700-713; 97 (1932) 7-15, 221-234, 417-434, 661-676; 98 (1933) 51-64, 224-241, 441-461, 679-703; 99 (1934) 13-30, 229-241, 437-454, 680-700; 100 (1935) 37-55, 229-248, 523-548, 758-780; 101 (1936) 5-30, 201-223, 481-508, 773-776; 102 (1937) 5-26, 277-310, 543-569, 785-825; 103 (1938) 3-58, 169-220, 417-460, 641-683; 104 (1939) 3-53, 257-319, 645-676; 105 (1940) 39-72; 106 (1941-1942) 88-123; 108-109 (1943-1944) 64-91; 110-112 (1945-1947) 147-166, 366-399. G. GOYAU, *La Congrégation de la Mission des Lazaristes*, Paris 1938; J. HERRERA, *Historia de la Congregación de la Misión*, Madrid 1949. R.S. POOLE, *A History of the Congregation of the Mission 1625-1843*, s.l. 1973. L. MEZZADRI - J.M. ROMÁN, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione, I. Dalla fondazione alla fine del XVII secolo (1625-1697)*, Roma 1992. L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione nel sec. XVIII: Francia, Italia e Missioni (1697-1788)*, Roma 2000.

¹⁰ L. MEZZADRI - J.M. ROMÁN, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione, I. Dalla fondazione alla fine del XVII secolo (1625-1697)*, Roma 1992. L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione, II. La Congrega-*

My introduction to studying the history of the Congregation was not an official appointment, but a chance meeting. At the start of the 1970s I had discovered in the archives of the Collegio Leoniano in Rome some bound volumes of letters entitled *Lettere francesi*. They were a collection of letters between the superior general and the French procurator of the Congregation in Rome. After a first reading I realised that this was very important material. It revealed deep tension within the Congregation, specifically between the curia in Saint-Lazare, the Italian confreres, and the Holy See.¹¹

The whole thing began with the death of Edme Jolly (26 March 1697), the second successor of St Vincent in running the Congregation, when King Louis XIV vetoed the election of Maurice Faure as his successor, because he was a native of Savoy, and had demanded that a French subject be elected. The instruction, dated 28 January 1699, to the Prince of Monaco, entrusted with a mission to Rome, considered the Congregation as a French institution which had some houses outside France, but this latter was considered to be an exception. However, on the basis of Gallican customs the king could not tolerate that a foreigner be elected head of such an institution. What is more, this institution was in charge of some parishes and chapels in places where the Court resided.¹²

zione della Missione nel sec. XVIII: Francia, Italia e Missioni (1697-1788), Roma 2000.

¹¹ L. MEZZADRI, *Gallicanesimo e vita*, in *Divus Thomas* 76 (1973) 65-109.

¹² [**Translator's note:** the author gives this quotation in the original French] "As the congregation of the priests of the Mission has its principal establishments in France and few houses in foreign countries, the election of a Superior General has always involved a French subject of the King. As *Le sieur Joly*, Superior General, died during the course of the recent war, His Majesty decided that such a happening called for new precautions to be taken to prevent the normal procedure being broken and that a foreigner might be elected General of a congregation of priests to whom His Majesty has entrusted care of parishes and chapels in places where His Majesty has his main residence, and one which, besides, has the greater number of its houses in his realm. Now that election time has arrived the priests of the Mission have been informed that His Majesty expects that not only will they choose the most suitable person, but that moreover they will ensure that a foreigner will not be elected." Paris, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Correspondance politique*, Rome, vol. 399, ff 8 ss.: *Instruction donnée par le Roi à M. le Prince de Monaco (28 janv. 1699)*. The instruction is also published in the *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs de France depuis les traités de Westphalie jusqu'à la révolution française publié sous les auspices de la commission des archives diplomatiques au ministère des Affaires étrangères*, t. 17, Rome, par G. Hanotaux, 2 partie (1688-1723)... par J. Hanoyeau, Paris 1911, 210. As a matter of fact the Congregation had charge of the royal parishes or chapels in Fontainebleau (1661), Versailles (1674), Invalides (1674), St.-Cloud (1688), St.-Cyr (1690): 118. On the parishes

For Lacour, this was a normal problem. For him the king was entrusted with a religious mission since he was anointed by the Lord, the image of God, his vicar.¹³ It would, therefore, be against God's will to disobey the king, whose power guaranteed the Church's freedom.¹⁴ It was not, then, a matter of papal imperialism, but one of Gallican tradition, which down the centuries had known how to maintain a subtle balance, more practical than theoretical, and which had been expressed in one way in the declaration of 1682,¹⁵ but which embraced also the relations between the religious orders within the kingdom and the Holy See.¹⁶

A long conflict began, about recognition of the Congregation as being French, which had its moments of acute tension. The Italians and Poles would not accept the surrender of the French to the wishes of the Sun King, and threatened to secede from the body of the Congregation. In 1704 the Superior General, Watel, gave serious consideration to the idea of appointing French superiors to the Italian houses.¹⁷

The *Lettere francesi* were a key element for me. It struck me that they had been used, for example, by Stella, but only to some extent, in so far as he discovered that many letters contained words, phrases, or even the entire text, which were in code. It has not been easy to crack the code. I soon realised that the system was what is known as simple substitution. In practice I then found that 31 must correspond to **m**, given that it preceded names (i.e. *Monsieur*), and 50, being of most frequent occurrence, must be **e**. Two letters in volume III were critical. In one of them, dated 29 June 1711, Bonnet admitted that he wished to withdraw a confrere from 51.21.31.50.¹⁸ I guessed that the

cf. L. MEZZADRI, *La Congregazione della Missione nelle parrocchie reali: una scelta tra fedeltà e opportunismo*, in *Vincentiana* 27 (1993) 338-346.

¹³ P. BLET, *Le Clergé de France et la Monarchie. Étude sur les Assemblées Générales de 1615 à 1666*, 2. vols., Rome 1959.

¹⁴ At this point there is an important omission: [**Translator's note:** The author gives this quotation in the original French] "The Visitors of France will be careful to give solid support to these warnings, pointing out that this exclusion is not of their own making and *that one may not disobey the King*": *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*, 292, *Histoire* (ms. F. 270 s.).

¹⁵ We should not make too precise a contrast between the attitudes of St Vincent and his successors; in actual fact they changed over time. Cf. R. CHALUMEAU, *Saint Vincent de Paul et le Saint-Siège*, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 5 (1967) 263-288; A.-G. MARTIMORT, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Paris 1953, 192 ff.

¹⁶ Regular clergy in the Kingdom had to depend on superiors who were subjects of the King.

¹⁷ L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 45.

¹⁸ *Lettere* III, 31-34.

name Rome was involved. Further on, the letter dated 1 November 1711¹⁹ compared the situation of the house in Avignon and the *Accademia dei Nobili di Roma* with that of 61.10.90.41.45.30.87.51. It had to be a question of a recent French house, of which the Congregation was not in full possession. I settled on Saint-Cyr by a process of elimination. I saw that the data tallied. From then on it was not difficult to complete the alphabet which revealed a group of letters made up as follows: 10 = A, 20 = B, 30 = C, 40 = D, 50 = E, 60 = F, 70 = G, 80 = H, 90 = I. It was easy then to understand the meaning of the missing letters as follows: L = 11, M = 31, N = 41, O = 21, P = 71, Q = 81, R = 51, S = 61, T = 45, U = U & V, X = 94, Y = 87, Z = 38. In a letter in code dated 9 March 1711²⁰ we read: 31.25:60.50.10:11.90.41.3011.76.61.50.:71.21.76.51:31.2:61.50.1121.41.61.10:71.51.76.40.50.41.30.50.15.16.19.

After I had de-coded it I saw that the letter recommended to 31.25, who was the French procurator in Rome, Antoine Philopald, to act in a certain way: *fera/dell'incluse/pour/ Mr. 2(Buglia)/selon/sa/prudence*. [he will make use of the enclosed for Fr Buglia as he sees fit]. The numbers 15. 16. 19 were simply padding. Philopald was the French procurator in Rome who, however, later left the Congregation at a certain moment because of his opposition to the bull *Unigenitus*.²¹ Buglia was an Italian confrere of the pro-French group, who had just been given an important appointment. What was this appointment? For the moment it was enough just to reflect that recourse to such an expedient, especially with regard to Italian confreres and the Holy See, was an eloquent indication of a very tense situation. Proper names were also encoded. 101 means Jesuits, 51 the Gallican clergy, 22 the Superior General, Number 9 kept coming up. It referred to an Italian confrere brought into the papal court, leader of a clique, whom the Superior General wished to expel from the Congregation. Who could this be if not Pier Francesco Giordanini, the great opponent of the French?

Pier Francesco Giordanini (1658-1717)²² had always held prominent positions in the Congregation which involved him in the

¹⁹ *Lettere* III, 67-72.

²⁰ *Lettere* II, 577-580.

²¹ L. MEZZADRI, *Fra giansenisti e antigianisti. Vincent Depaul e la Congregazione della Missione (1624-1737)*, Firenze 1977.

²² He published two works: *Istruzione per i novelli confessori nella quale si sminuzza tutta la pratica*, Pavia 1720, Roma 1726, Lucca 1734 (4 tomi), Napoli 1744 (2 tomi), Venezia 1773, Bassano 1780 (2 tomi), Roma 1841 (2 tomi), Torino 1845 (2 tomi); *Ichnografia o sia piano e pianta della vita e dell'ufizio del vescovo dove succintamente si dichiara tutta la pratica del governo vescovile*,

“nationalist” crisis. In fact during the General Assembly of 1697, when the French government exercised a veto on the candidature of Maurice Faure, Giordanini had protested vehemently on the floor of the Assembly. A twofold intervention of the Holy See was required to convalidate the election of the new General Nicolas Pierron (1653-1703, Superior General from 1697), and to dampen down the opposition expounded by Giordanini.

Giordanini’s role as spokesman for the opposition was certainly not the best way to get into the General’s good books. The latter had written that from the moment that Giordanini had become provincial “the spirit of our Congregation had been ruined in Italy.”²³ This led him to take immediate steps, by appointing a French procurator at the Holy See and a French provincial in Rome. Giordanini, besides, was accused of authoritarianism in that he acted without consultors, and of bias.²⁴ It was obvious, then, that notwithstanding points in his favour Giordanini would not be renewed in his position. To soothe to some extent the bad feeling about the succession it was suggested that Giordanini become Assistant General, a position which became vacant by the death of Pietro Terrarossa. But he declined to accept, not wanting to do “perpetual penance” in Paris.²⁵

The choice of a successor to Giordanini was a rather long drawn out affair. The General wanted to appoint a Frenchman. Giordanini was against this.²⁶ There was even an intervention by the Pope, perhaps via the nuncio, who let Pierron know of his “admiration for his goodness and deference towards the Italians.” This was a sort of pressure, veiled but clear. Pierron wanted, then, to safeguard himself by sending two Frenchmen to Rome, René Divers († 1725) and Antoine Delahaye Philopald (1674-1762). The Italians objected; “The name ‘French’ is hated by more or less the majority of non-ecclesiastical people, who lean more towards the Imperial way of thinking. and not just by us but also by those persons of balanced views who wish us well. As a result, it is not regarded as prudent

Roma 1719. This work was reprinted a century later under the title: *Vita e uffizi del vescovo a seconda dei dettami dei Sacri Concili. Dei SS. Padri e dell’istoria*, Roma 1850. On this see L. MEZZADRI, *L’ideale pastorale del vescovo nel primo Settecento*, in *Divus Thomas* (Piac) 74 (1971) 355-367. The more interesting work is P.F. GIORDANINI, *Le osservazioni sopra l’istituto e il governo della Congregazione della Missione*, published in *Le Missioni popolari della Congregazione della Missione nei secoli XVII-XVIII*, a cura di L. Mezzadri, Roma 2002, 671-728.

²³ *Lettere* III, 175.

²⁴ *Lettere* I, 147-150.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Lettere* I, 175.

wisdom to send, at the present time, a Frenchman to negotiate in Rome.”²⁷ Pierron suspected that the opposition was master-minded by a “triumvirate”, led by Giordanini. Feeling the urgency to have safe hands after Giordanini’s “pontificate” (as the General put it), Pierron chose Lazzaro Maria Figari († 1725).

The Italians’ bad feeling with regard to the French confreres’ arrival in Rome had risen to alarming levels, even threatening to undermine the unity of the Italian province. Pierron defended himself by asserting that he “had never sought, as has been claimed, to oppress the Italians, nor had he ever had any antipathy towards them.” To bring calm to the waters he had the idea of sending Giordanini to Genoa. But the latter replied that a Piedmontese would not go down well in the Genoese Republic.²⁸ Pierron then fell back on Pavia, but once again Giordanini objected.

The underlying tension erupted in all its vehemence at the Italian provincial assembly, held in Genoa from 29 April to 6 May 1703. Giordanini put forward several very courageous proposals to update the congregation’s way of life. This annoyed the general curia, which accused Giordanino of setting himself up “as a pope, claiming to change the nature and administration of our institute.” It was obvious by now that the prevailing opinion about the leadership of the Congregation inclined towards regarding the founder as an intransigent and immutable model, who paid no attention to history’s capacity to be malleable and creative. The role arrogated to themselves by the Superiors General was that of conserving an already perfected model, never asking themselves whether the letter could kill the spirit: “As regards our Italy there is no longer any love, and its administration, grounded on mutual charity, established by its Fathers, all French, has been restricted, and is being restricted all the more to stark authority; that means, with regard to us, being looked on as slaves, not as sons.”²⁹

Meanwhile Giordanini, although he had been appointed to open the house in Florence, and then to take charge of the *Accademia dei Nobili di Roma*, did not distance himself from the unrest in the community. In a letter to Paolucci, the cardinal Secretary of State, he asked for a direct and decisive intervention by the Pope. Jean Bonnet was appointed Vicar General by the Superior General François Watel (1651-1710, Superior General from 1703). He asked Antoine Delahaye Philopald, procurator at the Holy See, for solid

²⁷ *Lettere I*, 227 s.

²⁸ L. MEZZADRI, *Gallicanesimo e vita religiosa*, 76.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

grounds for expelling him [Giordanini] from the Congregation: "Try to get me solid grounds, either letters or depositions, from 4, 5 or 6 witnesses that 9 [Giordanini] is the cause of the present turmoil, and I will send you without delay what I have not wished to do 4 times already, for with persons like these one has to plant one's feet very firmly in order to avoid making any false steps."³⁰ This manoeuvre did not succeed, but in any event the general assembly of 1711, ably led by Bonnet, rejected the Italians' requests, which were certainly not revolutionary, alleging fidelity to the founder's spirit.

The problem worsened in 1724 when Jean Bonnet, the Father General, had to face up to the bull *Unigenitus*, which the Congregation had not officially accepted.³¹ In such a situation, Pope Benedict XIII, obliged the visitor of Rome, Bernardo Della Torre, to threaten the Superior General with grave sanctions, if it should happen that the assembly would not have subscribed to the bull. The document published by us says, among other things, that the bull had to be signed by all the members, especially the superiors of seminaries and the professors of theology; that superiors unwilling to sign had to be removed from any appointment. Otherwise the bishops in France would have had to withdraw all seminaries and colleges from the Congregation. It concluded: "Should it happen that neither exhortations nor threats achieve their purpose, in such a case Fr Bernardo, in union with the three other above mentioned provincials, is to notify the Superior General and chapter that His Holiness will authorise the three provinces of Rome, Lombardy and Poland, to have no further dealings or links with those of France, from which they will remain separated, and that His Holiness will command that they provide themselves with an different General as Governor."³²

The situation calmed down to some extent. There were embers under the ashes. The tension between the Italians, who wanted the General to move to Rome, and the French dragged on. To counter-balance the establishment of the province of Italy (Turin), the provinces of Piccardy and Brittany were set up. Every opportunity for a dispute was availed of. At the 1747 assembly the style of confreres' dress was discussed. Italians, Poles, Spaniards and

³⁰ *Lettere* II, 605-608.

³¹ L. MEZZADRI, *Fra giansenisti e antigiansenisti. Vincent Depaul e la Congregazione della Missione (1624-1737)*, Firenze 1977.

³² L. MEZZADRI, *Nuovi documenti sulla crisi dell'Unigenitus*, in *Carità e Missione* 3 (2001) 134-146.

Portuguese accused the French of having changed the material of the soutane. St Vincent's clothing was re-exhumed, and it was discovered, in fact, that the material used by the founder was lighter and better than that selected by the French.³³

Another clash about dress surfaced in the years 1774-1775. In a circular letter the General, Jacquier, had claimed that diversity in dress destroyed union in the Congregation. At the start of 1775 a brother let Cardinal Braschi know how much he resented being jeered at on the streets of Rome by kids who shouted "Baggy pants." The cardinal promised that if he had been elected Pope he would have ordered the superiors to change the brothers' dress. Pope Pius VI, as soon as he was elected, issued such a decree, which was received with very bad grace by the Superior General, who interpreted the Pope's words as merely expression of his desire to stop abuses on the part of the brothers.³⁴

After the restoration it was normal for the Congregation to reclaim its autonomy. The Holy See tried to profit from the situation by having the General transferred to Rome. The matter was brought to the attention of Charles X who invoked his veto for such an initiative. For the French government the superior general always had to be French and his general curia must have its seat in Paris.

As may be seen from the scarcity of studies about our history, humility is not the motive, but a political agenda aimed at denying the existence of tension between the centre and the periphery, between Paris and Rome, between the General's regime and the Holy See, which cannot be denied. It is not going to be denied, but delved into and judged on the basis of precise ecclesiological and political choices.

3. The Spread of the Congregation up till the French Revolution

Outside of France the congregation spread in successive waves, as it were. The first phase took place in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Congregation of the Mission spread from France into Italy and Poland, while bands of missionaries were sent to the British [Scottish] Isles, to Ireland and to Madagascar (which were, though, withdrawn during the generalate of Alméras). Pastoral centres to take care of the Christian slaves were established in Tunis (1645) and Algiers (1646), which had diplomatic exemption.

³³ L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 138.

³⁴ L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 346.

There is much to study about this period. It is necessary to evaluate the material which we have, especially in the French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese archives.

In Italy the reports of missions have been greatly valued, having thrown much light on one of the most important pastoral services in the renewal of the modern Church.³⁵

The Italians established houses in Spain (1704), which, however, were not readily recognised by Paris, (even though Spain was set up as an autonomous province in 1774). This is a matter which calls for in-depth study. In the Roman archives there is a wealth of material which, it seems to us, has not been evaluated in celebrating the recent centenary of the foundation of the first house in Spain (1704).

The foundation of the first house in Spain is closely linked to the Roman province.³⁶ Francisco Sentjust y Pages (1654-1708), having met the missionaries in Monte Citorio, had prepared the ground in Spain for opening a house. Philip V quickly agreed, getting Cardinal Luis Manuel Portocarrero to notify this to the archbishop of Barcelona. The latter, after a moment of uncertainty for political reasons, agreed. Clement XI then sent him a letter for the establishment of a house of the Mission in Spain, laying down that the house should be part of the Italian province. The General, who had been practically excluded from the negotiations, granted the superior's patent to Giovanni Domenico Orsese (1663-1735).

It was a concession pulled from between gritted teeth. Watel moaned about this to Figari, adding — but this was only for his close associate Anselme — that he would have intervened with the king of Spain.³⁷ On the basis of a number of points gleaned from letters from the superior of Barcelona, perhaps also to solve the problem of

³⁵ *Le Missioni popolari della Congregazione della Missione nei secoli XVII-XVIII*, a cura di L. Mezzadri, Roma 2002. The author brings together several of his own studies and those of others. Later contributions will come from various avenues of research which he has undertaken in different areas.

³⁶ On this whole matter see: *Résumé de la fondation, des progrès et de la suppression de la Congrégation en Espagne*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 40 (1875) 44-65; *Origine de la Congrégation de la Mission en Portugal*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 45 (1880) 201-212; Stella 1, 158-161; Silva 162; J. HERRERA, *Historia de la Congregación de la Misión*, Madrid 1949. *La Congregación de la Misión en España 1704-2004. Caminos de Futuro*, XXX semana de estudios vicencianos, Salamanca 2005.

³⁷ **[Translator's note:** The author gives this quotation in French] "As this establishment was made by the Sovereign Pontiff we have considered ourselves bound to agree without hesitation, or at least without giving rise to a belief that our obedience to the Holy See was less than perfect." Watel to Anselme, Paris 27 Oct. 1704, *Lettere* II, 37 ff. Cf. the letter to the same addressee, 23 June 1704: *Maxima cum gallis quaestio*, 116, a document in ACL

dependence on one or other visitor, the General thought of making the new house immediately subject to the General, until he could erect a Spanish province.³⁸ Sentjust then vehemently pointed out to Orsese that the General's action conflicted with the decisions of the Holy See.³⁹ Watel replied that dependence on an Italian visitor involved excessive expense,⁴⁰ and the Italian assistant, Viganego, confirmed the General's declaration, in a letter to Figari, adding that there was no hidden agenda.⁴¹ Sentjust, who obviously had no greatly developed sense of the unity of the Congregation, thought of requesting a brief of exemption for the Barcelona house from the General's authority, in order to forestall being taken by surprise. Figari told Cardinal Paolucci how annoyed he was by the proposal: "These gentlemen have a pipe-dream, that would be the Congregation of the Mission but without the head of the Mission. Your Eminence knows that almost all of us want to be governed by our Superior General as sons of a good father, but none of us will ever agree to be separated from him." And in order the better to back up his words, Figari added that the royal foundation decree laid down that our house should be governed according to the norms current in the congregation.⁴² Orsese did not look at the matter in the way that Sentjust did. According to the superior in Barcelona the Superior General had not, in fact, acted contrary to the papal instructions; he also criticised Sentjust who wanted "to remove French nationality from our midst as being prejudicial to Spain, which undoubtedly would be more prejudicial."⁴³

Another matter which arose, then, for the Barcelona house, in addition to the internal tensions, worsened by Sentjust's temperament,⁴⁴ was the problem of relations with the General. Leaving aside the force of Orsese's evaluations, it was symptomatic of the state of tension between the centre and the periphery, in other words between the General and the Roman province, which had developed even to the point of suggesting, to some, serious consideration of a plan for some sort of exemption from the General.

coming from Cardinal Paolucci (Protector of the Italian Vincentian), in which he says he had spoken "French" to Figari.

³⁸ Orsese to Figari (?), Barcelona 29 Sept. 1704, in *Maxima*, 25.

³⁹ Orsese to same, Barcelona 17. Nov. 1704, *ibid.*

⁴⁰ This is how Figari refers to a letter of Watel, 3 Sept. 1704, *ibid.*, 28.

⁴¹ Viganego to Figari, Paris 8 Sept. 1704, *ibid.*

⁴² Orsese to Card. Paolucci, Barcelona 22 March 1705, *ibid.*, 32 ff.

⁴³ Figari to Card. Paolucci, undated letter (but before 1705), *ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁴ Sentjust, in actual fact, did not wish to do his novitiate: Watel to Anselme, 1 December 1704, *Lettere* II, 41 ff.

It can be seen, therefore, that historical research contributes to greater understanding. It is a real pity that such contributions are neither studied nor utilized.⁴⁵

4. *The Revolutionary Storm*

During the French Revolution⁴⁶ the congregation went through much suffering. After being restored by Napoleon the Vincentians were again suppressed in 1809.⁴⁷

Vicars General were appointed for governing the congregation. First in importance was the one who lived in Rome, responsible for governing all the provinces outside of France; the second was in charge of France and the Daughters of Charity. The governing of the Daughters of Charity is an important story in itself. Napoleon was not against the revival of the community, but he wanted Hanon, the Vicar General, to withdraw from the direction of the Daughters of Charity, because he wanted the bishops to be in charge. This shows that he valued their service, regarded at the time as indispensable, but did not understand the value and the feeling of being linked to the Congregation of the Mission.

Also during this period there was evidence of manipulation of history. The beatified martyrs are celebrated, such as François, Gruyer, Rogue, Nicolas Colin, Jean-Charles Caron, and others for whom we have merely the fact of their having been martyred, such as Martelet, Guin, Rimbault, Gallois, Hayer, Lucas, Julienne, Bailly, Brochois, Imbert, Martin, Guinant, Guibaud, Dodin, Portefaix, Bergon, Verne, Janet, Parisot, Chambovet, Frayssé, besides thirteen other confreres imprisoned in Bordeaux and Blaye. According to Coste, when the Congregation was re-constituted in 1814, out of 508 members who belonged to the French provinces, leaving aside 120 who had died, only 21 returned, 4%. As many as forty had completely lost their vocation, 8%. It is significant that about 200 members had felt no urge to return, 46%. As well as this a veil of silence had covered the matter of betrayals and defections, and the

⁴⁵ The foundation and activity of the Portuguese province (1713) also should be studied in depth. It is on record that the minister Pombal went to our house to make a retreat. Is that not a matter worth looking at?

⁴⁶ L. MEZZADRI, *La Chiesa e la rivoluzione francese*, Cinisello Balsamo 1989; ID., *Storiografia del bicentenario della rivoluzione francese. Appunti per un bilancio*, in *I grandi problemi della storiografia civile e religiosa*, a cura di G. Martina - U. Doveve, Roma 1999, 233-269; ID., *La Rivoluzione francese e la Chiesa. Fatti - documenti - interpretazioni*, Roma 2004.

⁴⁷ J.W. CARVEN, *Napoleon and the Lazarists*, The Hague 1974.

fact that two confreres were elected constitutional bishops of Rouen and Sedan. This could have brought the French character of the Congregation to a critical point. For this reason it was preferred to maintain silence about the shortcomings and defections, and stress the heroism.

A more general problem may be faced up to here: is it permissible to bring up for discussion matters from the private sphere and the moral behaviour of individuals? Is there not perhaps a danger of lack of respect for the dead, and for confreres on whom it is not permissible to pass judgement? These are valid points; however, we must not forget that we are developing “a history of the confreres,” which impinges even on their lives, sufferings, behaviour, fidelity and weaknesses. We are not intending to judge and condemn, but neither are we drawing up a work of apologetics, stressing the positive aspects and concealing the negative ones. In concealing these facts we cause damage to the Congregation.

For this period there is one aspect which deserves attention, the fact that the Congregation was thriving in Poland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. This means that the traditional model of the Congregation was holding, and had validity, whether in France or elsewhere.

5. The change of direction by Etienne and his successors up to 1900

An important turning point was reached in 1843 with the election of Fr Jean-Baptiste Etienne (1843-1874) as Superior General; he has been considered “the second founder.”⁴⁸

A satisfactory treatment of him is still lacking. We realise that he has been judged differently when we compare Spanish, Italian and French points of view. He was an energetic man, and he strengthened discipline, wanted observance of the rules and reinforced the authority of the Superior General, all by means of strict centralization. At the same time he continued the missionary revival begun by his immediate predecessors. This was helped on the one hand by an upturn in popular Catholicism in Europe and on the other by the establishment of many apostolic schools, which altered the recruitment scene.

⁴⁸ [E. ROSSET], *Vie de M. Etienne*, Paris 1881; E.R. UDovic, *Jean-Baptiste Etienne and The Vincentian Revival*, s.l. 2001; *La Congregación de la Misión en España 1704-2004. Caminos de Futuro*. XXX semana de estudios vicencianos, Salamanca 2005.

The lines of this development can be synthesised by following the areas to which the Congregation of the Mission expanded.

Ireland. The Congregation of the Mission had attempted to get into Ireland and England in the time of St Vincent, and later for a very short while in London under James II (1687-1688), but unsuccessfully. The revival came spontaneously. Two students in Maynooth College realised the need to establish a group of preachers for popular missions. They were encouraged in this by Dowley, the college dean. In 1833 they opened a school, and acquired a property in Castleknock, where they welcomed Dowley as their superior. At that time they were informed that there already existed in Paris a community for the same purpose. They made contact with Nozo, the Superior General, and actually became part of the Congregation of the Mission. The province was established in 1848 and developed rapidly. There were some notable members, such as Fathers MacNamara, O'Sullivan, Burke, Lynch, Hickey, MacCabe, Gillooly. Four missionaries were appointed bishops. As well as missions, there were educational works, groups of young people and of workers, a commission for political affairs, a lending bank, and especially the Saturday League against alcoholism. The Irish missionaries also swarmed outwards into Scotland, England and Australia. They accepted responsibility for staffing the Irish College in Paris and took on foreign missions (China, Nigeria).

There are a great many problems calling for study: persons, works, methods, spirituality, political opinions.

Spain and Portugal. The Congregation had one province in Spain (1774). It had to endure much from the decrees of the anticlerical government suppressing religious communities (03/03/1836). Of the confreres forced into exile some opted for France and Italy, but others chose the missions in America. The situation was all the more difficult when the houses of the Daughters of Charity in Spain increased to 45. The Servant of God Buenaventura Codina was the man who restored the community, but he wanted a large element of autonomy for the Spanish Province. The memory of the Napoleonic occupation still rankled. The General, Etienne, did not agree. He moved rapidly to have him appointed bishop of the Canary Islands. He was even more brutal with his successor, Buenaventura Armengol. Because he had, with government support, requested both the General and the Holy See to grant autonomy, Etienne accused him of trying to bring about schism, and expelled him from the community (1856). He expelled other confreres along with him, some students and brothers, and appointed Fr Masnou, the vice-visitor in the United States, as visitor. When the province was troubled once

again some years later, after the September 1862 revolution, some Spanish confreres departed for the missions, setting in motion the restoration of the province, which grew rapidly from 1875.

With regard to Spain, Codina and Armengol should be studied, but not just in their relations with Etienne. What were the Spanish confreres' reactions to the various government suppressions and oppression? What were the political attitudes? (Were there liberal confreres?).

By the end of the 1700s the Congregation had made great strides in Portugal, when it had to take over from the Jesuits in Goa and in China. After the French invasion (1807) the Portuguese also asked for greater autonomy, given that up to then the houses had been directly dependent on the Superior General. While the community was experiencing a crisis at home some confreres brought the Vincentian charism to Brazil (1820). In 1829 the province was established, but it was only under Etienne that the community could flower once again.

A history of the Portuguese province should be undertaken, especially its presence in China. One query: Why did the *Mémoires* by-pass the Portuguese province?

Poland. The flourishing community suffered a lot from the three partitions of the nation (1772, 1793, 1795). In 1874 there was the Krakow province in the Austrian part, with only 5 houses. According to Herrera, at the notification of the suppression by the Russians (8 November 1874), the province sided with the persecutors rather than with the persecuted.

Germany and Austria. The origin of the German province had a pre-history in 1781, after the suppression of the Jesuits, when French confreres were sent into the Palatinate for the Heidelberg and Manheim colleges. The central house of the new province was in Cologne, where five priests decided to devote themselves to parish missions. They contacted Etienne who welcomed them into the novitiate in Paris. When he appointed a superior for them, Fr Konrad Hirl, a German confrere who had joined the Roman province, he established them as a province in 1853. But the Kulturkampf was disastrous for the confreres, and they were suppressed on 20 May 1873. The odd reason for their suppression was that like the Redemptorists, the Holy Ghost Fathers and the Dames of the Sacred Heart, they were "affiliated" to the Jesuits and were subject to a Superior General of foreign nationality, to whom they were bound in blind obedience. The dispersion brought the German confreres, top quality men, to different parts of the world, including Abyssinia and Latin America.

The confreres had also arrived in Austria in the 1700s to take charge of the seminaries in Vienna, Ternaw and Wacz. But success did not smile on the initiative. In 1837 a different outcome resulted from the decision of Sister Leopoldina (Josephine) Brandis (1815-1900), together with a group of young ladies of the nobility in Graz, to join the Sisters of Charity of Strasbourg. After being professed she returned to her native city, undertaking hospital ministry. The community flourished to such an extent that Sister Leopoldina was able to send eight Sisters to take care of soldiers in Hungarian military hospitals. At that time she was being directed by a diocesan priest Johann Klaischer († 1853). In 1850 Sister Leopoldina and all the Sisters amalgamated with the motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity in Paris. Etienne then requested that the new community be under the direction of St Vincent's missionaries. Johann Klaischer was the first to join the Congregation. When he had completed his novitiate (1852) he was appointed superior and director of the Daughters of Charity, laying the foundations of the Austrian province. In 1875 the province comprised 21 confreres. It was never very large. Nevertheless, the confreres were very active in missions and retreats, and ministries for the Daughters of Charity. Ministry to the Sisters took up much time, given that at that date there were more than 600 of them, and they had opened houses in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Styria, Carinthia and other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Austrian province flourished under Fr Wilhelm Mungersdorf and his successors, extending all through the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, giving rise to the provinces of Austria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and the vice-province of Czechoslovakia dependent on Paris.

Research should also be undertaken with regard to the history of the Austrian and German provinces.

6. *The case of China*

Around the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries the Italian Vincentians Appiani, Pedrini and the German Müllener, arrived in China as missionaries of Propaganda, ranging themselves against the Jesuits in the question of the rites. When Fr Gabriel Perboyre (1808-1880), a cousin of the saint, published the *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*,⁴⁹ the Jesuit General, Peter Beckx (1795-1887, General from 1853),⁵⁰ denounced to Propaganda the

⁴⁹ *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission*, IV-VIII, Paris 1865-1866.

⁵⁰ See the evaluation of his generalate in *Diccionario historica de la Compañía de Jesús*, 2 (2001) 1671-1675.

political intention of the Congregation of the Mission in wishing to perpetuate prejudices and discords, and in particular he accused the *Mémoires* of the “most serious calumnies against the Society of Jesus in the section dealing with our former and present-day missions.” The [Jesuit] General had the volumes examined by two censors, who agreed with assessing them as calumnious. One of them suggested bringing them to the attention of the Holy Office.

The prefect of Propaganda wrote to Etienne, who replied that the volumes were written “*sine mea prævía cognitione*,” indicating however that he would be willing to withdraw them, if he was formally ordered by Propaganda. Things moved forward slowly, partly because of the transfer of the motherhouse to Brussels, until Etienne received a formal injunction for the withdrawal of the volumes, which he immediately executed. In 1911 and 1912, however, a new edition of the *Mémoires* was published, in which it was stated that all the sections which depended on the writings of non-confreres and which were not directly concerned with the history of the Congregation in China, had been eliminated.⁵¹

This problem of the *Mémoires* has never been faced up to within the Congregation.⁵² The history of the Chinese mission has been tackled from the point of view of the French confreres, whilst that of the Portuguese confreres has not been looked at.

At the moment a large amount of material relative to Teodorico Pedrini is being assembled. Teodorico Pedrini is a controversial figure. Pastor has written everything possible unfavourable to him,⁵³

⁵¹ A. MILON, *Mémoires de la Congrégation de la Mission: La Chine*, 3 vols., Paris 1911-1912.

⁵² A very well-researched study is that by Fatica, who made use of the Neapolitan archives of the Collegio della S. Famiglia di Ripa: M. RIPA, *Giornale (1705-1724)*, 2. vols., a cura di M. Fatica - F. d'Arelli, Napoli 1999. *La missione cattolica in Cina tra i secoli XVIII-XIX. Matteo Ripa e il Collegio dei Cinesi*, a cura di M. Fatica - F. d'Arelli, Napoli 1999. See also, though, A. THOMAS [J.-M. PLANCHET], *Histoire de la mission de Pékin*, 2. vols., Paris 1923-1925. J. VAN DEN BRANDT, *Les Lazaristes en Chine 1667-1935*, Pékin 1936. H. CRAPEZ, *Les Lazaristes et le clergé chinois de 1697-1900*, in *Revue d'histoire des missions* (1938) 14-59. O. FERREUX, *Histoire de la Mission en Chine (1699-1950)*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*, 127 (1963). R.S. POOLE, *A History of the Congregation of the Mission 1625-1843*, s.l. 1973.

⁵³ Pastor XV, 327. It is known that the *Storia dei Papi* by Pastor had got as far as vol. XIII when the author died (1928). It was “completed” by P. Kneller, W. Wühr, by P. Kratz and by Schmidlin (for the missions). The judgements given, in a very polemical sense, by Tournon and Mezzabarba are rather about his successors. A. PELZER, *Louis von Pastor d'après ses journaux, sa correspondance et ses souvenirs*, in *RHE* 46 (1951) 192-201. We still lack a thorough biography of Pedrini; there is a manuscript in vol. *Missioni estere, Cina*, in ACL with some letters; other letters are in vol. *Cina*, and in the

while others have defended him. The main archival sources for research into this confrere are the archives of Propaganda in Rome, those of the Congregation of the Mission in the Collegio Leoniano, those of the Society of Jesus in Rome, those of the Vatican Library (fondo Fouquet), and in Paris those of St. Lazare (The Vincentian Motherhouse) and those of the Missions Étrangères.

Of the published sources we would mention those based on Perboyre's *Mémoires*.

His musical output is very important, shown by recent interest in his compositions along with those of the Jesuit Joseph-Marie Amiot, composed for the Emperor.

There are quite a number of problems concerning evaluation and selection: the link between inculturation and theology, the reverberation of the polemics about China during the Enlightenment in Europe, the presence of the missionaries and the presence of serious researchers in Peking, the cultural back-ground of the missionaries and the information forwarded to Rome, where Propaganda had to make decisions on the basis of positions which were not always balanced (correspondence proves how Pedrini was part of this). We need to clarify the part played by certain writings, which Theiner, a polemical defender of Clement XIV, pointed out to Perboyre, to set in perspective the polemics about the rites in the final phase.

The great period of the Chinese mission re-awakened with Etienne.⁵⁴ We do not intend to undertake a reconstruction of the history of our mission in China, which, however, needs to be done. Instead, we will face up to certain problems of method.

Formation. In general, missionaries did not receive any specific preparation, but were formed only for discipline (obedience) and asceticism (self-denial for souls). During the time of studies and novitiate the aim was to convey the pressing need to work at personal sanctification and for the salvation of souls, convinced that within the span of a few generations there would be mass conversions. In order to achieve this, political and cultural matters were

archives of Propaganda, in the Corsiniana library, in the archives of the MEP in Paris. On him see A.B. DUVIGNEAU, *Théodorice Pedrini, prêtre de la Mission, protonotaire apostolique, musicien à la Cour Impériale de Pékin, 1670-1646*, Pei-p'ing 1937 (Italian translation Roma 1942). F. COMBALUZIER, *Théodorice Pedrini, le missionnaire, le musicien à la Cour impériale de Pékin*, in NZM 8 (1952) 270-287; 9 (1953) 149-151. Id., *Théodorice Pedrini, missionnaire apostolique*, in NZM 13 (1957) 139-157. L. MEZZADRI, *Teodorico Pedrini C.M. (1670-1746) missionario e musicista alla Corte imperiale di Pechino* (at press).

⁵⁴ L. MEZZADRI, *Le missioni vincenziane in Cina nel Sec. XIX*, Roma 2000.

by-passed, not much attention was paid to the question of native clergy as they were regarded as being inadequate. There were plenty of vocations, and it was considered that diverting resources to native clergy was useless waste. Most of the missionaries built schools, catechumenates, orphanages and hospitals, as evidence of charitable commitment.

Missions and politics. When Danicourt was appointed vicar apostolic of Chekiang in 1850 changing some pagodas into churches was regarded as acceptable. The local people objected, occupied the pagodas and destroyed the liturgical fittings. Danicourt then requested the aid of two French warships. The admiral, however, did not comply. Etienne took a poor view of the Danicourt operation. He even proposed transferring him to a different vicariate. This took two years to implement, having met with opposition. It is important to pay more attention to Danicourt's way of looking at matters than to the happening itself. He was convinced that China had to be ruled by Europe. Until France had taught China a good lesson, the treaties would be meaningless.

In 1856 Baldus openly requested protection for the Catholic missions and sought French military intervention: "The Chinese are certainly afraid of Europeans; that's why the government forbids the Christian religion; they are afraid that foreigners will take the opportunity to spread all over China, destroying their way of life and their emperor. As long as distrust is backed by the court we need not expect willing tolerance of Christianity. But since the court is very afraid of the Europeans we need to take advantage of this mentality.... Four or five warships would be needed to deal with this and impose it on them."⁵⁵

7. The Congregation of the Mission in the 20th Century

The 20th century started off with an important happening. In France a law against religious congregations was voted into effect on 1 July 1901.⁵⁶ In 1901 there were 128,000 female and 30,000 male religious. One fifth of these had to go into exile, others went back to their families or worked out some way of un-noticed belonging. 13,904 teaching establishments were suppressed.

⁵⁵ L. WEI TSING-SING, *La politique missionnaire*, 506-512.

⁵⁶ *Le grand exil des congrégations religieuses françaises 1901-1914*, édité par P. Cabanel et J.-D. Durand (Colloque international de Lyon - Université Jean-Moulin-Lyon III - 12-13 juin 2003), Paris 2005.

In France at that time there were eight [CM] provinces: France, Picardy, Champagne, Touraine, Lyon, Aquitaine, Languedoc and Provence. In the whole of France there were more than 400 confreres who were priests.⁵⁷ Many others were on the missions in China, Persia, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Algeria (which was a separate province), Abyssinia, Madagascar, the West Indies, Chile and Argentina. Fiat, the Vincentian Superior General, asked the French confreres to make an extraordinary sacrifice, indicating various destinations for them to move to, in Latin America, China, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Persia and the Levant. But getting away was no easy matter. After a certain age it was not easy to tackle a new language and get involved in a non-European culture. What happened, as Jacqueline Lalouette has shown, was that only one in six agreed to set out for the missions.⁵⁸ Many went to Belgium and Holland. The exile of the French confreres had a twofold effect: they lost the seminaries, and therefore a source of vocations, and the [CM] provinces in France were reduced to three: France, Aquitaine and Provence. If we skim through the list of seminaries we see that the Congregation of the Mission had major seminaries in Evreux, Amiens, Cambrai, Lille, Solesmes, Chalons, Meaux, Troyes, Tours, Angoulême, Berceau, La Riochelle, Carcassonne, Albi, Cahors, Saint-Flour, Marseille, Montpellier and Nice. In 1919 they got back the seminaries in Evreux, Beauvais, Troyes, Verdun, Perigueux, Angoulême, Montauban, Albi, Montpellier and Nice. But the overall number of seminaries was halved.

The misfortune for the French was of benefit to the provinces of Belgium and Holland, where the Vincentians already had a presence. The exile of French and German confreres meant that a certain number of houses could be established and a province set up (1902), which later split into the provinces of Belgium and Holland (1921), giving great impetus to the missions in the Congo, Indonesia and China. At the beginning of the 1930s the German province was significant. It had about a hundred confreres and missions in Palestine, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. The same is true for Austria, with its college in Istanbul. The Hungarian province, which had been established in 1926, had by 1934 four houses, nineteen priests, twenty-four brothers, twenty-two students and ten seminarists (novices). Poland, which had been re-established, had one hundred and five students and seventy-four seminarists, had

⁵⁷ At that time the names of the lay brothers were not recorded in the *Catalogue des maisons et du personnel* (This will be cited as CMP, with the year).

⁵⁸ J. LALOUETTE, 1901, *les congrégations hors de la loi?*, Paris 2002.

sixteen houses in Poland and was able to establish houses in France, Romania, China, USA, Brazil (the future Curitiba province). The Yugoslav province (1926) was also showing promise, with the provincial house in Ljubljana; it already had an impressive personality in Janez-Francišek Gnidovec, bishop of Skopje.

How would one rate the vitality of the Congregation in the 20th century? While the White Fathers, in their general chapter in 1926, established the “Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes” [Institute for Arabic Literature] and while innovative articles on the mission were published,⁵⁹ no initiatives of any sort were undertaken in our congregation. We had the missions, but we did not have an idea of the mission. De Lubac stressed the importance of prayer for missionary action. Fr Danielou’s *Cercle Jean-Baptiste* urged the need for having the precursor’s approach. Thanks to the Jesuit Pierre Charles (1883-1954)⁶⁰ a worthwhile link was established between theology and missiology, and this was also developed by Joseph Masson,⁶¹ Thomas Ohm, OSB (1892-1962),⁶² Edouard Loffeld, SVD⁶³ and André Seumois, OMI.⁶⁴ The UMMI (Unione Medici Missionari Italiani) was founded in 1933.

This state of affairs explains the Lebbe⁶⁵ phenomenon. He was born in Ghent and joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1895.

⁵⁹ Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) published *Le fondement théologique des missions* (1936) and *Catholicisme* (1938), Yves Congar (1904-1995) *Vaste monde. Ma paroisse. Vérité et dimension du salut*, and Jean Danielou (1904-1974) *Le mystère de l’Avent* (1948).

⁶⁰ P. CHARLES, *La prière missionnaire*, Paris 1935. Id., *Dossier de l’action missionnaire*, Louvain 1939.

⁶¹ J. MASSON, *Théologie générale de la fonction missionnaire*, Rome 1971. Id., *Le bouddhisme: chemin de libération, approches et recherches*, Paris 1975.

⁶² T. OHM, *Asien Kritik am abenlandischen Christentum*, München 1948.

⁶³ E. OFFELD, *Le problème cardinal de la théologie et des missions catholiques*, Rhenen 1956.

⁶⁴ A. SEUMOIS, *Théologie missionnaire*, 5 vols., Rome 1973-1981.

⁶⁵ In order to understand Lebbe it is necessary to have recourse to the “Centre Vincent Lebbe” at the Catholic University of Louvain. C. SOTTENS, *Inventaire des Archives Lebbe*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1982; *Lebbe’s writings: Choses vues par un missionnaire en Chine*, in *Lectures pour tous*, 15-1-1914, 694-707; *Aperçu historique sur la mission de Chine*, memorandum sent to Rome in 1918 and published with revisions in *L’Église catholique partout indigène*, in *Bulletin des missions* 6 (1923), 393-400, 501-506, 520-531. See also L. LEVAUX, *Pensées du P. Lebbe*, Paris-Bruxelles 1950; P. GOFFART - A. SOHIER, *Lettres et écrits spirituels*, Bruxelles 1966. Among the biographies: L. LEVAUX, *Le Père Lebbe, apôtre moderne*, Louvain 1953; J. LECLERCO, *Vie du Père Lebbe*, Paris-Tournai 1955 (very controversial); A. SOHIER, in *DS* 9 (1975) 449-450; C. SOETENS, *Pour l’Église chinoise*, 1, *La visite apostolique des missions de Chine 1919-1920*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1982; Id., *L’encyclique Maximum illud*, Louvain-la-Neuve

On completing his studies he was appointed to our missions in China in 1901, shortly after the Boxer Rebellion. He was ordained in Peking and very quickly realized the mistake which European missionaries were making, especially his own confreres who relied on the French protectorate. He used to say: "China for the Chinese, and the Chinese for Christ." This is why he did not want the church in China to be a branch office of the European churches. He valued Chinese culture highly, had a perfect knowledge of the language, and respected Chinese customs. In 1911 he established Catholic Action in China and in 1915 founded the first Catholic daily newspaper *I-sce-pao*. He was a shrewd observer of the missions and he recognized the prejudices of the Europeans against the native priests, whom they considered inferior, less spiritual and insincere. He stood for absolute equality between European and Chinese priests, and tried to get the missionary authorities to grasp how opportune it was to push for a Chinese episcopate.

He was not backed up by the confreres. Being Belgian and not French, he met with opposition, he was marginalised and even moved inconsiderately from one vicariate to another. In 1920 he returned to Europe and continued his campaign. He achieved a victory in 1926 with the episcopal ordination of six Chinese priests. He went back to China in 1927 and took out Chinese citizenship, but by now he was on the periphery of the community. In 1928 he founded *The Congregation of the Little Brothers of St John the Baptist* in Ankwo (Hopei). This was a monastic community whose motto was "Trappists at home, apostles elsewhere." Each house was called "The House of the Beatitudes." The following year he founded a community for women, *The Little Sisters of St Teresa of the Infant Jesus*.

He left the Congregation in 1933, having being dispensed from his vows, and took his vows in The Little Brothers of St John the Baptist. Meanwhile he was the inspiration behind the establishment of a twofold Society of Mission Helpers, one male branch and one female. The latter was founded by Yvonne Poncelet (1906-1955) and André Boland. This double society was lay, but committed to being of service to the Missions.

In 1940, the first year of the war, with Edouard Robert as Vicar General, there was not much change. Austria had sixteen students and six seminarists. Germany had twenty-four students and eight seminarists. Spain had one hundred and two students and forty-five seminarists. Holland had sixty-nine students and twenty-seven

1983; P. GERMAIN, *Paolo Manna et Vincent Lebbe, pionniers de l'évangélisation*, in *Omnis terra* 30 (1991) 137-144.

seminarists. Ireland had eighteen students and sixteen seminarists. Rome had twenty-seven students and twenty-six seminarists. Turin had forty-nine students and twenty-seven seminarists. Naples had fifteen students and three seminarists. Poland had one hundred and thirty students and twenty-eight seminarists. Hungary had thirty-eight priests, thirty-five brothers, fifteen students and nine seminarists.

In 2006 the Congregation has 4034 members, 3395 being incorporated: 2 cardinals, 31 bishops, 3047 priests, 93 deacons, 171 brothers incorporated, 53 philosophy and theology students (who have already taken their vows). There are in addition 639 admitted members: 624 students and 15 brothers. All these are spread over all the continents, in forty-six provinces, five vice-provinces, one region, and five hundred and fifty-three houses all told. The province of Belgium has vanished from Europe, becoming a region of the Congo province. Holland is on the road to disappearance. Austria and Germany between them have only twenty-six priests. France has two provinces, Spain four, Italy three, all in rapid decline. The provinces of Slovakia (1989) and Slovenia (1992) are increasing, as well as Poland.

8. Conclusions

Confreres were formed to a low-profile pattern, stressing fidelity to the Rule. They were men for hard work rather than for study (with obvious exceptions). The intellectual and attention-attracting efforts of Ferdinand Portal (1855-1926)⁶⁶ and Guillaume Pouget (1847-1933)⁶⁷ were never looked on favourably by the powers-that-be in the Congregation. Confreres who published were in fact sidelined. But more than this, it must be pointed out that theological reflection carried very little weight in forming our charism. The French *Annales* ceased publication. André Dodin's *Mission et Charité* was, in fact, a personal initiative.

⁶⁶ A. GRATIEUX, *L'amitié au service de l'union: Lord Halifax et l'abbé Portal*, Paris 1951; H. HEMMER, *Monsieur Portal, prêtre de la Mission, 1885-1926*, Paris 1947. R. LADOUS, *L'abbé Portal et la campagne anglo-romaine 1890-1912*, Lyon 1973. ID., *Monsieur Portal et des siens, 1855-1926*, Paris 1985.

⁶⁷ J. GUITTON, *Portrait de M. Pouget*, Paris 1941; ID., *Dialogues avec Monsieur Pouget sur la pluralité des mondes, le Christ des Evangiles et l'avenir de notre espèce*, Paris [1954]. J. CHEVALIER, *Bergson et le Père Pouget*, Paris 1954. R. ANTONELLO, *Guillaume Pouget (1847-1933) testimone del rinnovamento teologico del secolo XX: biografia del pensiero*, Milano 1995; ID., *Guillaume Pouget et le renouveau théologique au tournant du XX^e siècle*, in *Vincentiana* 48 (2004) 15-33.

Up to the 1970s we were formed by the lives of St Vincent which were read out in the refectory. It was almost only in France that books and studies were produced. The situation was worsened by withdrawal from the majority of seminaries, especially in France but in other countries as well, as the diocesan clergy was gradually prepared to take over this work. This caused incalculable harm to the Congregation, as the number of confreres devoted to studies was reduced.

In those times there was some development with the *Fiches vincentiennes*, the *Salamanca Semanas*, the *Groupe International des Études Vincentiennes* (GIEV) which later became SIEV⁶⁸ (*Secrétariat International des Études Vincentiennes*). The project for an Institute or Faculty of Pastoral Theology, affiliated to a Roman university, was not approved. CIF (*Centre International de Formation Saint Vincent de Paul*) was preferred, though it does not confer academic degrees, and does not publish either a review or collected studies.

During the 20th century parish missions also decreased in importance, as did ministry to the clergy; working in parishes became the majority ministry.

Cooperation with the Daughters of Charity was also very important. Some provinces were created in order to provide confreres who would be available for ministry with the Sisters.

The situation has now changed. No longer are we “Carthusians at home and apostles abroad.” The traditional image of a Vincentian in the old days has vanished. The rules have changed, as have dress, houses, missions, books, spirituality.

It is beyond my competence to assess whether all this has taken place according to the spirit and charism of St Vincent. My aim is merely to point out some routes of historical research:

- a) **See:** We must do research in archives (Vatican, national, those of our general Curia and of the provinces, of public bodies, and of families of the nobility linked to us) and catalogue the documents we discover. We must trawl through administrative documents, maps and plans of buildings, lists (libraries, confreres...), contemporary photographs, and anything which could document our history. All this should be brought together in a study centre.
- b) **Judge:** Once the material has been gathered we have to evaluate, organize and study. What image of a Vincentian

⁶⁸ The GIEV (*Groupe International d'Etudes Vincentiennes*) was loosely organised internationally; it was a “group.” It was only later that SIEV (*Secrétariat International d'Etudes Vincentiennes*) was established by the curia.

emerges? How did they live? What was their spirituality, their degree of freedom under the secret police, party politics, choices in Church affairs? What about their on-going formation (*aggiornamento*), their zeal for missions? What about the strategic decisions taken by the curia, by provinces and by houses? We must also take on board Cicero's dictum,⁶⁹ quoted by Leo XIII: "Primam esse historiæ legem ne quid falsi dicere audeat, deinde ne quid veri non audeat."

- c) **Act:** Maybe the moment has arrived to set up a Centre for Vincentian Studies. This is not a decision we ourselves can make. That is something for the Superior General. I think we are allowed to make the suggestion. On the provincial level I think it is important to prepare someone who will have the time to direct research into the history of our community. But everybody needs to be brought to an appreciation of the need for conserving documents relating to our past.

Translation: THOMAS DAVITT, C.M.

⁶⁹ MARCI TULLII CICERONIS, *De Oratore ad Quintum Fratrem*, II, 15.62.

Strengths and Weaknesses in Vincentian Historiography

by Jaime Corera Andía, C.M.

1. Three summaries of Vincentian historiography (up to 1987)

The first summary of Vincentian historiography is from 1981 and is by A. DODIN, "*Etat des etudes vincentiennes*" (Actes du Colloque International d'Etudes Vincentiennes, Paris 1981 - Rome, Edizioni Vincenziane, 1983, pp. 115-128). Dodin sums up in the following manner the principal characteristics of Vincentian historiography from the beginnings to 1981:

- * the institutional tradition "*The governmental authority (of the CM) tranquilly sets itself up as a scientific and historical authority and peremptorily pronounces about the authenticity of the documents which are used*". Dodin refers here to the four great biographies of Saint Vincent written by Abelly, Collet, Maynard and Coste (pp. 122-125).
- * the tradition of legend "*After 1660 there is a phenomenal and heroic growth in the legends: Monsieur Vincent had taken upon himself the chains of a man condemned to the galleys, he was entrusted with a precious secret about the future of France..., he had secretly abandoned the Catholic confession and had become a member of the Socinian family..., the leaders of the Revolution of 1789 recognized in Vincent de Paul a revolutionary of excellent quality... and they linked his named to those of Fenelon, B. Franklin, J.J. Rousseau..., in 1947 Maurice Cloche (in the film "Monsieur Vincent") used Pierre Fresnay to place Vincent in situations in which he was never involved*" (pp. 126-127).
- * the "decolonizing" tradition Important persons and authors who reveal themselves as critics of the person and the works of Vincent de Paul: Bérulle, Saint Cyran, Musson (historian of the monastic orders), R. Allier, A. Bessieres, A. Féron (in his studies about the Confraternity of the Most Holy Sacrament) (pp. 127-128).

The second summary is that of L. MEZZADRI: *“L’historiographie vincentienne selon les époques culturelles”* (*Vincentiana*, 1984, 4/5/6, pp. 292-313). In this summary the author concentrates on the published biographies from Abelly to date, and he classifies them in four categories according to the following criterion: *“From Abelly until the present, the biographies of Saint Vincent are presented as the expression of a culture, of a way of understanding history and of interpreting the saint”* (p. 292):

- * in the period of illuminism: Collet 1748 (p. 292)
- * in the period of romanticism: Maynard 1860 (p. 295)
- * in the period of positivism: Coste 1932 (p. 296);
Calvet 1948 (p. 302)
- * in the period of New History: Dodin 1960 (p. 304);
Román 1981 (p. 307).

L. Mezzadri also is responsible for a third historiography *“Storiografia vincenziana”* (*Vincentiana*, 1987, 4/5/6, pp. 368-385). This work is the first systematic, detailed study of the biographies and studies about Saint Vincent published up to 1987. It contains an appendix which is of interest: *“How to form a Vincentian library,”* pp. 385-391.

We should also add to the previous works: J. RYBOLT, *“Documentary evidence for the life and works of Saint Vincent de Paul”* (*Vincentiana*, 1987, 4/5/6, pp. 392-437), the most complete list published up to 1987 of references to the documents related to the life and the works of Vincent de Paul.

We also must add one of the most complete biographies published up to now: J.M. ROMÁN, *San Vicente de Paúl. Biografía*, BAC, Madrid 1982, pp. 11-25.

* * *

2. Biographical interpretations of Saint Vincent

In relation to the four great biographical classics (Abelly, Collet, Maynard, Coste), Dodin highlights

- * the “institutional” character: *“Inspired and guaranteed by the authority of the Superior General of the CM”* (p. 122)
- * the “static” character: *“The four great biographies ignore even the possibility of a doctrinal and moral evolution of Vincent de Paul”* (DODIN, *Vincentiana*, 1984, p. 550)
- * the “moralizing-hagiographical” character: (*Colloque*, p. 122)

(About L. Abelly: DODIN, *Vincentiana*, 1984, pp. 280-287; *Colloque*, p. 123; about P. Collet, M.-U. Maynard, P. Coste: DODIN, *Colloque*, pp. 123-125; see also L. MEZZADRI, *Vincentiana*, 1984, pp. 292-300).

A complete list of biographies published in French and Spanish up to 1984 in "*Obras Completas de San Vicente*," CEME, Salamanca, Vol. XII, pp. 609-630.

A later biography: MARY PURCELL, *The World of Monsieur Vincent*, Loyola University Press, 1989.

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3. Controversial themes in the life of Saint Vincent

Date of birth: 1576, 1580, 1581?

- * The status of the controversy: J.M. ROMÁN, "*San Vicente de Paúl. Biografía*," pp. 29-33.
- * In favor of 1580: F. CAMPO, "*1580-1980: Cuarto Centenario del Nacimiento de San Vicente de Paúl*," *Anales de la CM y de las HC*, Madrid 1977, pp. 551-555.

The history of the captivity

- * The status of the controversy: J.M. ROMÁN, pp. 74-88.
- * New perspective: B. KOCH, "*Un regard neuf sur Saint Vincent: l'expert en droit et en procédure*," *Bulletin des Lazaristes de France*, No. 168, April 1999, pp. 94-104; 109-110. (Can also be found at webpage Koch cmparis).
- * Most recent study: J. CORERA, "*La historia del cautivo Vicente Depaul*," *Anales de la Congregación de la Misión y de las HC*, Madrid 2007, No. 3, pp. 243-255.

Why he went to Paris in 1609

- * COSTE, Book I, chapter 2, at the end; J.M. ROMÁN, pp. 90-91.

Conversion or evolution?

- * Conversion: J. CORERA, "*Diez estudios vicencianos*," CEME, Salamanca 1983, pp. 13-40 (the most important authors who have dealt with this theme are cited here).
- * Evolution: A. DODIN, "*Saint Vincent de Paul et la charité*," Paris 960, p. 150; J.P. RENOARD, "*Les années obscures*," *Vincentiana*, 4-6, 1987, pp. 548-561.

Priestly ordination

- * A. Redier: Vincent rushed things “taking advantage of his vacation, to receive the priesthood at nineteen years of age at the hands of a blind prelate who was dying” (*Vicente de Paúl, todo un character*, CEME, Salamanca 1977, p. 34, translation of *La vrai vie de Saint Vincent de Paul*, Grasset, Paris 1947).
- * B. Koch: “Vincent did not act hurriedly nor in a hidden fashion, as Redier writes... see the studies of M. JOSEPH DEFOS DU RAU: *Le jeune Vincent de Paul s’est-il fait ordonner prêtre pas surprise?*, Bulletin de la Société de Borda, Dax 1959, pp. 273-288, and M. ÉTIENNE DIEBOLD, C.M.: *La première Messe de Saint Vincent*, Ann. C.M. 1957, pp. 490-492, and *Saint Vincent de Paul, sa nomination à la cure de Tilh en 1600*, ibid. 1959, pp. 389-397, particularly pp. 391-392” (B. KOCH, C.M., “*Saint Vincent de Paul. Dossier des ordinations*”; cf. webpage: [koch cmparis](#), article *Ordinations et jeunes années*).

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4. Some topics which need more investigation

Although the life of Vincent de Paul is well known in its principal aspects thanks to his numerous biographers, nevertheless there still remain some topics that have not been explored in a satisfactory manner, either because of the complex nature of the topic, or because of the scarcity of pertinent documents. We shall point out some of these themes:

- * the changing relationship with Saint Cyran (A. DODIN, “*La légende et l’histoire: de Monsieur Depaul à saint Vincent de Paul*,” O.E.I.L./Histoire, Paris 1985, pp. 164-173).
- * his relationship with Jansenism
 - doctrinal issues
 - collaboration in charitable works
- * his relationship with the Company of the Most Holy Sacrament (A. DODIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-161).
- * his relationship with the Visitation.

See also: J. RYBOLT, *Vincentiana*, 1987, p. 428: “VI. Documents we wish we had.”

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5. Rereading the life of Saint Vincent

- * **the “archeology” of the life of Saint Vincent**, that is, the plain facts relative to his life:
 - where and when he lived: the historical context
 - what happened to him
 - what he did
 - what he said

Although there are some gaps, as was mentioned in the last section, this dimension is now basically finished (Coste, Dodin...).

- * **an interpretive rereading**: the vision of Saint Vincent from the situation and perspective of the biographer. Every biographer “interprets” the subject from his own life-experience and cultural perspective (see Dodin and Mezzadri in § 1 and 2). This also occurs with studies on the spirituality of Saint Vincent, whether they are of a private nature because of an individual author, or of an official nature because of an institution (the actualization of the spirit of Saint Vincent in the new Constitutions...). Because of its very nature, the effort involved in an interpretive rereading is never finished, and it varies over time because of historical changes.

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6. The sources of the spirituality of Saint Vincent de Paul

- * A. DODIN, *“Les sources de l’enseignement de Monsieur Vincent de Paul”* (Vincentiana, 1984, pp. 544-555):
 - difficulties in discovering the sources (pp. 544-552)
 - some of the principal sources: Scripture, some of the Fathers, some few theologians, some spiritual authors (pp. 553-555)
- * A. ORCAJO (in *“San Vicente de Paúl. Biografía,”* Vol. II, *Espiritualidad y escritos*, BAC, Madrid 1981, pp. 59-78).

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7. Systematic studies of the spirituality of Saint Vincent

(We should not strictly speak of “spirituality”, but rather of “teachings”: DODIN, *Vincentiana*, 1984, p. 544).

- * L. ABELLY, Book III

- * U. MAYNARD, *“Vertus et doctrine spirituelle de saint Vincent de Paul,”* Paris 1864
- * A. DODIN, *“Saint Vincent de Paul et la charité,”* Seuil, Paris 1960
- * C. RICCARDI, *“La perfezione evangelica,”* Roma 1967. (The most systematic study)
- * J. HERRERA, *“Teología de la acción y mística de la caridad,”* Madrid 1960
- * *“Diccionario de espiritualidad vicenciana,”* CEME, Salamanca 1995
- * A. ORCAJO, *“El seguimiento de Cristo según san Vicente de Paul,”* La Milagrosa, Madrid 1990
- * M.P. FLORES, *“Revestirse del espíritu de Jesucristo,”* CEME, Salamanca 1996.

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8. The later history of the “spirit” and the foundations of Saint Vincent

General overview: L. MEZZADRI in *Vincentiana*, 4/5/6, 1984, pp. 312-313.

The history of the institutions founded by Saint Vincent (AIC, CM, DC) has not yet been written, except in part the history of the Congregation of the Mission (Herrera, Poole, Román-Mezzadri), or that of one or another of the provinces (Vicente de Dios in Mexico, A. Orcajo in Spain), or that of a particular ministry (Mitzel Olabuenaga wrote the history of the popular missions in Spain)....

Also pending is the study and the writing of the influence of the spirit of Saint Vincent and his institutions

- * in the later history of the Church
 - Alphonsus M. Liguori, F. Ozanam and the Conferences of the SSVP, J.B. Vianney, Don Bosco....
 - congregations dedicated to charitable works
- * in the Vincentian Family
- * in the later history of society (*“We owe to Saint Vincent de Paul the revolution that, for the past three hundred years, has transformed social life and the spirit of our laws, for which we have fought and which... are our supreme hope. The past had no idea of the institutions which the states, responding to the pressure of opinion, have created for themselves since then: aid for the poor, health insurance, the legal obligation to assist the needy, to go to the help of victims of war, of disasters... the*

public organization of education, the learning of different trades"; A. MÉNABRÉE, "La révolution inaperçue: Saint Vincent de Paul, le savant," Marcel Daubin, Paris 1949, pp. 9-10)

- * A case study: the influence of the Daughters of Charity in the creation of modern nursing (Florence Nightingale: see abundant information about this important figure easily accessible on the Internet).

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Final Note

Almost all of the material referenced in this work, which in no way is meant to be exhaustive, is by European authors and has been published in Europe. In the last few years publications on Vincentian themes have begun to appear in practically all the countries where the Congregation of the Mission is present, and in a great variety of languages as well. We highlight the important work that has been done in America for many years, in the north by the Vincentian Heritage publication, and in the south by the publication of CLAPVI.

Translation: GILBERT R. WALKER, C.M.

Methods of Historical Research

by Miguel Ángel Olabuenaga Ornes, C.M.

Part I:

THE GREAT OUTLINES OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH IN THE 19th AND 20th CENTURIES

Introduction

- Up to the 19th century the principal contributions to Historiography were from theologians and philosophers
- They used the rational scientific method which was the fruit of the scientific revolution of the 17th century and of the Enlightenment
- Both factors allowed one to know the world without the help of the supernatural

1. THE GREAT HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CURRENTS IN THE 19th CENTURY

- In the 19th century, history acquired the character of science
- Four tendencies helped this: liberalism, romanticism, positivism and historical materialism. They originated from the French Revolution and from the changes it provoked

1.1. The Liberal Historiography

- Daughter of the bourgeois revolution. Fight against feudal society
- The revolution ends once the bourgeoisie gained power
- **Guizot, Tocqueville, Henry Hallam...**

1.2. Romanticism

- At the end of the 18th century. Reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment
- Its bases are found in Germany, in the nationalist movements
- **Hegel, Michelet...**

1.3. Positivism

- It pretended to have a formation of a social science which will not confuse it with the natural sciences but will use its methods
- Knowledge based on the sources is the knowledge par excellence
- **Comte, Ranke**

1.4. Marxism

- Its contribution was manifested in three fields: philosophy, the analysis of the capitalist system and the social sciences
- It arose as a reaction to the system of social relations imposed by the bourgeoisie
- It understood the human evolution through the stages of progress defined by the nature of the relations of production among men
- **Marx** introduces the concept of “social class”

2. THE GREAT HISTORIOGRAPHIC CURRENTS IN THE 20th CENTURY

- In the 20th century, one observes a profound theoretical and methodological renewal
- Three tendencies contributed to this work: The Annales School, Marxist renewal, New Economic History, and Area Studies
- There was a tendency towards a Total History

2.1. The Annales School

- What, in the beginning, was a historiography school around a magazine, was converted into a germ of different currents
- Its founders were researchers close to economic and social history
- They used methods of other sciences (Economics, Anthropology, Sociology)
- Annales went away from narrative history and political dominance. It tended towards total history
- **Henry Berr, Bloch, and Febvre** (founders)
- **Vicente Vives, Bradel** (consolidation) 1950s
- **From 1960** (the fields of study were expanded: rural history, history of institutions)
- Criticisms of Annales School

- Lack of reflection. It has valued more the use rather than the social project and it has not succeeded in elaborating a consistent theory. **Josep Fontana**
- It has left behind the reflection theory in favor of monographs

2.2. Marxist Historiography

- Preoccupation with socioeconomic problems, study of popular class
- Marxism became the antagonist of historicism
- For historical materialism there exists a relation among the economy, organization and ideology of a society

2.2.1. *Influence of Russian Revolution (1917)*

- With the Russian Revolution, theory is placed at the service of the state
- Stalinism supposed a subordination of history to politics
- The economist tendency became acute, which reduced all historical manifestations to reflections of economic life
- **Marx, Engels, Stalin** and **Lenin** were the obligatory reference

2.2.2. *From WWI*

- In the **Soviet Union**: the Triumph of dogmatism, only official arguments are accepted
- In **Germany** and others: Triumph of Stalinist concepts (Stalinist Economics)
- **Lukaes, Korsch, Gramsci**

2.2.3. *From the second half of the century*

- Its principal preoccupations are the problems related to the relation among structures and superstructures
- The economic is subordinated to the social
- The group of historians of the Communist party: **Hosbawm, Thompson, Hill**

2.2.4. *Recent Marxist Historiography*

- **Pierre Vilar** formulates the need of a Marxist history which offers a global vision
- His monographs intended to escape dogmatism

2.2.5. *Conclusions*

- Historical materialism has exercised influence in history as well as in science
- It has stimulated the study of processes and social movements
- It has studied the problems of interpretation

2.3. **The New Economic History**

- At the start of the 20th century economic history became an independent discipline
- From 1903, it started to be introduced in universities
- Definitive launching from 1918 in France, USA and Great Britain
- **Schumpeter** exposed that together with economic conditions one has to take into account other global historical factors. The theory of economic development
- The Quantitative History: **Labrousse**
- History appears as a field of economic history. **Marczewski**
- This method implies the use of material statistics which could be scarce

2.4. **Area Studies. Other contemporary trends**

It appears in the USA. Analysis of international relations and study of the region in order to explain its role in the international context.

- **Ratzel** was the first to establish the relation between man and soil
- Geographic knowledge to study the evolution of societies
- Flexibility in the needed disciplines to create an Area Study
- **Duroselle** thinks that at least History, Geography and Sociology are needed
- In Area Study, the smallest area with international personality is the State
- Some sectors believe that there is a risk that an atomization will arise
- **Fontana** turns against History as ideology
- Some historians return to narrative and to traditional Historiography. **Lewis Stone**

Part II:
METHODS OF RESEARCH

1. CONCEPT OF RESEARCH

Research is the search of an orderly, coherent knowledge, of analytic reflection and continuous confrontation of empirical data and abstract thought, in order to explain the phenomenon of nature.

The same author explains: "In order to discover the relations and basic interconnections to which the process and the objects are subjected, it is necessary that abstract thought, (concepts, hypothesis, laws, theories) ought to be sanctioned by experience and concrete reality..." (p. 7).

To research supposes the application of human intelligence to the exact comprehension of the objective reality in order to take dominion of it. Only to capture the essence of things, upon confronting it with reality, is the work of the researcher completed. The consequence of such an incremental process will increase the scientific knowledge.

2. KINDS OF RESEARCH

There exist diverse treatises on the types of research. The controversies to accept the different typologies suggest the confused situations in styles, forms, focus and modalities. Rigorously, and from the semantic point of view, the types are defined as systems to obtain knowledge.

2.1. According to the source of information

- documentary research
- field research

2.2. According to extension of the study

- census investigation
- case research
- survey

2.3. According to variables

- experimental
- quasi experimental
- simple and complex

2.4. According to the level of mediation and analysis of information

- quantitative research
- qualitative research
- quasi-quantitative
- descriptive investigation
- explicative investigation
- inferential investigation
- predictive research

2.5. According to the techniques of obtaining data

- participating research
- participative research
- projective research
- research of high and low structuring

2.6. According to temporary situation

- historical research
- longitudinal or transversal research
- dynamic or static research

2.7. According to object of study

- pure research
- applied research

3. TECHNIQUES OF RESEARCH

Concepts of scientific method

The method to acquire knowledge called scientific is a rigorous procedure of logical order, whose purpose is to demonstrate the value of the truth of some statements.

The word method comes from the roots: *meth* which means end, and *odos* which signifies way. Therefore, method is the way to reach a goal.

Method and methodology are different concepts. The method is the procedure for reaching objectives. Methodology is the state of method.

Techniques of investigation

The technique is indispensable in the process of scientific investigation, because it integrates the structure by means of which the research is organized.

The technique tries the following objectives:

- to put order in the stages of research
- to make use of the instruments to manipulate information
- to take control of the data
- to orient the acquiring of knowledge

As far as the techniques of research, the two general forms will be studied: documentary technique and the field technique.

The documentary technique allows for the recompilation of information in order to formulate theories which sustain the study of the phenomena and processes. It includes the use of defined instruments according to the documentary font to which they refer.

The field technique allows the observation in direct contact with the object of study, and the scope of the witnesses which permit the confrontation of the theory with practice in the search for the objective truth.

3.1. Documentary Technique

The objective of documentary research is to develop a conceptual theoretical limit to form a body of ideas on the object of the study.

With the purpose of selecting the instruments for the compilation of information, it is convenient to refer to the sources of information.

3.1.1. *The primary sources of information*

These sources are the documents which register or corroborate the immediate knowledge of the research. They include books, journals, technical sources and thesis.

Books. In agreement with UNESCO (1964) by the name *book* is meant that publication which has more than 49 pages and *pamphlet* that which has from five to 48 pages. According to types of usage, books are classified: general type, writings in elemental form, and textbook for the study of a discipline; specialized for the professionals and researchers. Monographs are documents in which a topic is treated exhaustively.

Journals (Magazines). Are documents of recent information, generally specialized publications. They can be professional, technical, scientific.

Technical Information. In this type of information are included minutes of conferences, the news of congresses, meetings and others. They are important due to the fact that the information generally deals with current topics which affect a particular community or an interest group.

Diaries and newspapers. Are source of information in so far as they contain facts occurring in space and time, past and present.

Thesis. A thesis is an academic type of document, which demands an original affirmation about the themes of a particular study. It is expected to be a contribution and new knowledge presented as a solid system of proofs and conclusions. In the thesis is described the procedure employed in the research findings and conclusions.

3.1.2. *Secondary Sources of information*

This includes encyclopedias, yearbooks, manuals, almanacs, bibliography, index, among others; the data which includes the secondary sources are based on the primary sources.

3.1.3. *Instruments for documentary investigation*

Bibliographic Index Card. Commonly it is a card of 5 × 3 in. In it are annotated the corresponding data to the work and author, preferably with a base in the international code.

- *Objective.* To locate, register and search the source of information
- *Order of the data:*
 - Name of author, paternal surname, maternal name; the father's surname is written in capital letters
 - Title of the book is underlined
 - Series or collection in parenthesis as well as volume
 - If it is a translated work, the name of the translator
 - Editorial
 - Country where published
 - Year of publication
 - Number of edition. If it is the first this data is omitted
 - Total number of pages of the book

Newspaper Index. This kind of index card contains four types of data:

- title of publication
- name of director
- place of edition
- periodicity

Work Index Card. It has special relevance in the work of research. Its construction should be creative. It is the fruit of reflection, analysis, synthesis, and criticism. In general, they are on a card of 5 × 8 in. For better conservation they can be placed on pieces of paper of the same measurement.

Objective: To put in order, classify and register theoretical information on the object of study.

Order of data: bibliographical data; data for the organization of the index cards: themes, text or data.

Quotations. The documentary research implies organizing the content, utilizing the same work card. The references make the work more true and serious; the citations can be done within the text and annotated at the foot of the page or at the end of the work or chapter as “notes of the text.”

Objective: Reinforce, classify, complement, show the sources of information.

To cite the references in the text, one can use the progressive enumeration, the method of name and date, or symbolic figures.

The numbering of the references always has to be consecutive; it could be done by page, in which case the numbering is re-begun in every page, or by chapter in which case it is restated upon citing the first reference and ends at the last page of the chapter.

Notes at the bottom of page. The objectives of the footnotes of the page are: to cite bibliographic references or the sources of information; to amplify the explanations; to clarify or correct or suggest to the reader new possibilities of research.

Posterior References. When in a document there is already a mention in a footnote of a document, the posterior references are made by utilizing Latin abbreviations. Among these are: *Ibid.*, meaning “in the same place”; it is used to make known that it is about the same consulted document; it is used when there are notes of other documents in between. *Loc. cit.*, Latin which means “cited

place” is used to signify that it is about a references to the same document and page. Op. cit. means “cited work” but is used to refer to a previously cited work.

Notes of content and references. These are used to amplify the information, to reference other parts of the works consulted, and to send the reader to other parts of the work. The following terms and abbreviations are used: Infra which means below; Supra meaning above; Apud meaning “cited by”; Vid: “please see”; Sic: “thus” or “exactly as cited”; Et al: “and others.”

3.2. Field Technique

The observation instrument is designed according to the object of the study.

Objectives of the observation:

- Explore, to make precise aspects before the structured and systematic observation
- Gather information for interpreting findings
- Describe the facts

Set requirements to observe:

- Limit the objectives of the observation
- Specify the procedure or instrument of observation
- Provide continuous proofs

Types of observation:

De Gortauai says: “In this field observation it is necessary to distinguish the two principal classes: the participating observation and the non participating.” (In the first, various dispersed researchers participate, with the end of gathering collective reactions. In the non-participating observation, the researcher is foreign to the group. He asks authorization to stay in it and observe the facts he needs.)

Instruments for field research:

For the simple observation, the more common instruments are: field index; diary, registries, cards, notes, maps, diagrams, camera, drawings.

For the systematic observation, the more common instruments are: plan of observation, interviews, questionnaires, inventories, maps, registries, statistical forms, measurements.

Field Index Card. This index card is used to note the data collected by means of observation. In general cards of around 8×5 in. are used. The order of the data are: name of place where the observation was done, name of the informer or informers, date, aspect of the guide of observation in the upper right hand corner. Theme at the center. Text: description of observation. Initials of the researcher at the lower left corner.

Interview. The survey is a search in which questions are employed for knowing the public opinion. It consists of the group of oral witness and writing of persons who are still alive. In the field investigation, in order to compile information, one can use interviews, questionnaires and exhibits, among others. The interview is one of the usual techniques in the social sciences. It can be defined as the relation that is established among the researcher and the subjects of study. It can be individual or group, free or directed.

Objectives of the interview:

- To obtain information on the object of study
- To describe with objectivity situations and phenomena
- To interpret findings
- To present solutions

For the interview. The steps are: planning, execution, control and closure:

- Planning for interview: work out the guide; define clearly the purpose of the same; determine the human resources, time and needed budget; plan the date with the interviewees, showing respect for the time of interview
- Execution of interview: prepare a positive ambience during the interview; present oneself and explain the purpose of the same; show interest and know how to listen; act naturally and not show haste; ask the questions without an implicit answer; employ a tone of modulated voice; be frank; do not extract information of the interviewee without his consent; do not overwhelm with the questions; avoid appearing aristocratic. Allow the other to explain himself fully
- Control of the interview: verify if all the questions have been answered; detect contradictions; detect lies, pointing out what is known of fact; avoid deviations from the theme and opportunities for distracting attention

- Closing of interview: end it before the interviewee gets tired; say goodbye, leaving an open field just in case it is necessary to return. If a long interview is required, program it in several sessions

Questionnaire. It is an instrument to collect information which is filled out by the one questioned.

- Objectives: To do uniform observation. To fix attention in some essential aspects of the object of study. To isolate problems. To make precise the required data
- Steps for the design of formularies: Delimit the objectives; make variables operative; determine the unity of observation; election of method of application; make the person collecting the interviews more efficient; proof of the questionnaire; design properly
- Rules for the design of the questionnaire: Make them short; use clear and precise terms and a simple presentation. The size should facilitate its use. The spaces to be filled in should be sufficient for the answers. Always signify the objectives to be aimed at. Preferably ask closed questions in order to precisely facilitate the process of information. Give instructions for its completion
- Types of questionnaires: By charts with objective data; of opinion; of organization and functioning. Closed questions are those that only permit an opinion to answer; open questions are those that leave full liberty to answer
- Disadvantages of a questionnaire: It can only be applied to persons who know how to read. The answers could be falsified. There could be questions without answers. They should be perfectly structured
- Advantages of a Questionnaire: It is economical. It can be sent to faraway places. It is applicable to a large group of people
- Validation of the Questionnaire: Once the questionnaire is prepared, it should be submitted to a validation for validity, reliability and feasibility. It is applied in experimental form to a small group of persons. It will have validity if it truly gathers the expected data. If independent from whom it is applied, it produces the same result, it is trustworthy. It will be operative when the terms employed generate the same interpretation

4. THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The design of the research is the plan of action. It indicates the sequence of the steps to follow. It permits the researcher to make precise the details of the work of investigation and to establish the strategies to follow in order to obtain the positive results, and at the same time to define the form to find the answers for the persons asking, which induced the study.

The design of the research is placed in the document with special characteristics, scientific language, temporal location, global characteristics and provision for recourse.

Objectives of the design of research

The research design has also another denomination: plan, protocol, design or project of research, among others. Even if the terms are different, in essence they are similar as far as they refer to the plan of work.

4.1. The Objectives of the plan of investigation are

- To define the surrounding context of the object of study
- To make precise the object of study
- To define and limit the problem of the research and the aspects which intervene
- To select the method and techniques adequate to the object of the study
- To organize and systematize the actions to develop
- To describe the necessary resources
- To verify the feasibility of the study

4.2. Characteristics of the research plan

The plan of the research, as a document of a scientific character, has special characteristics which ought to be taken into account while developing it.

Congruence. This refers to the fact that there exists a logical link among the elements which form it. The title of the study manages the variables which are found in the problem, the objects, the hypotheses and the techniques and methods of analysis used which will be in function to said variables.

The theoretical foundation. The plan includes the theories relative to the objective of the study in an exhaustive form.

Flexibility. It is important that the plan considers the possibility of realizing the changes or adaptations without disorganizing the original design.

Scientific language. The plan ought to express itself considering scientific terminology. For example: the design is of experimental type and the technique is balanced.

4.3. Defects of the research plan

Upon developing the research plan it is possible to commit errors and omit some details, which leads to defects of the plan. The errors of design are many times very costly; in others, the initial purposes of the study are not successful.

4.4. Some defects of the design are the following

Non-definitions of the theme and the purposes of the study. These occur when the concepts employed are nebulous.

Inadequate theoretical management. It is the result of the theoretical ignorance relative to the object of the study, complexity of the theoretical framework.

Complexity of the theoretical framework. When the level of complexity of the theoretical framework used is due to the enormous volume of data on the theme, and in its turn, the analysis of such theories which summarize and relate with the problem to be investigated is not produced, the theoretical framework becomes complex.

Imprecise technical methods. When the researcher does not know or has an insufficient level about the investigation, it is almost sure that the discrete techniques in the plan are inadequate.

5. THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

As already explained, the scientific method is the procedure which is followed to obtain knowledge. The convergent points of the diverse authors are relative to the stages of the method. In general, it can be concluded that they are the following:

Stages of the scientific method

The principal stages of the scientific method are: selection and statement of the problem which motivates the research; the structuring of a theoretical framework; establishment of the hypothesis; proof of hypothesis; results; proposals derived from the study.

5.1. Selection and statement of the problem

The constant interaction with the environment permits us to observe the situations which sometimes open up a series of questions. For example, in the practice of nursing we can observe that the majority of the patients prefer the attention of certain determined nurses. Because of this, questions like this occur: Why do they prefer this particular person to take care of them? What is the quality of care that the other nurses give? Has the quality of care something to do with the recovery of the patient?

Each of the questions asked limits the wide area of problems (preferences of the patient, quality of care of nurse, quality and recovery). The questions asked are not sufficiently precise to be researched. If the questions make us troubled to a considerable degree, we should define and limit the problem of the research. For this we will consider the following aspects.

Sources of the problems: What is the origin of the problem? What are the professional and scientific interests of the researcher to do the study? What is the knowledge about the theme? What application should be given to the results of the investigation? On giving the answer to the preceding questions, it is inferred that the problems come from the environment, the capacity to reason, the professional interests and the results of the research.

Types of problems: Theoretical (whose purpose is to generate new knowledge); practical (with the objectives destined for progress); theoretical-practical (to obtain information unknown in the solution of the problems in practice). Without doubt, there exists a great number of problems which troubles us, but perhaps the greater part of those are not at the reach of everybody. The requirements to select a research problem are: experience on the theme; importance of the problem; knowledge of its management; scientific relevance; human relevance; contemporary relevance.

The requirements for elaborating a research problem are: show the manifestations of the problem; manage the variables to the minimum; define with clarity the problem; limit the aspects which the problem includes.

5.2. The structuring of the Theoretical Framework

The theory gives meaning to the research. It is from the existing theories on an object of the study that new knowledge can be generated.

The internal and external validity of the research is demonstrated in the theories which supports it, and in that measure, the results can be generalized. The theoretical framework of the investigation considers:

- Explicit and implicit concepts of the problem
- Specific operational conceptualization
- Relations of theories and adopted concepts
- Theoretical analysis on which the hypothesis is dependent
- Conclusion of the implications of the theory with the problem

5.3. Establishment of the hypotheses

The hypotheses are the conjectural suppositions in transition towards their confirmation. One has to depend on the theoretical analysis to form suppositions with high degree of certainty.

The hypotheses are the bond between theory and practice; they are constructed of three elements.

- the object of the study to which the unity of the analysis is denominated
- the variables which are known as properties of the various units of analysis
- the relation which is described as the logical terms which unite the objects with their relationships

Requisites to develop a hypothesis.

- construct it based on reality which is being explained
- give it a foundation in the theory relating to the fact that is being explained
- establish the relationships among variables
- be susceptible to put in experimental proof to verify its validity
- give the best answer to the research problem with a high degree of probability
- not fall into anything superfluous in its construction

Function of the hypotheses.

- to show the way to search for the objective truth
- to give impulse to the scientific work
- to systematize the knowledge
- to permit an explanation of the object of the study

- to form a connection between the knowledge obtained and what is being searched for
- to attempt at explaining through the truthfulness of suppositions which require proof

5.4. Proof of a hypothesis

The main purpose of the research is constituted by the proof of the hypothesis. It attempts to prove if the observed facts concur with the planted hypothesis. Generally, it has two steps: selection of technique and gathering of information.

Selection of Technique

In order to prove or refute the hypothesis it is necessary to select at least two or three techniques of research, and different types of observation of phenomena. In the social sciences, the documentary technique and field research should be applied. It is important to do the following considerations:

- To employ the technique that will be in accord with the type of hypothesis which it is desired to prove
- To design the instruments according to the selected technique
- To validate the instruments
- To determine the exhibit

Gathering of information

The most formal way of proceeding in the search of information is to follow the lines of the scientific method. Statistics are very useful in the manipulation of information. The process consist in:

- gathering of information
- tabulating them
- presenting them
- analyzing them

Methods of collecting data

Interviews: Sample information is collected, and so is not applicable to the total population.

Census: The information is gathered in a general form for the whole population.

Registers: The information is continuous. It is gathered at the time it is produced.

Techniques of gathering

- Interviews
- Application of questionnaires
- Observation

Methods of Tabulation

Lists. When there are few units and they are manipulated on two scales.

Linear Graphs. Consists of inputting on a piece of paper a stroke for each unit counted. This is not used for a large number of observations.

Simple cards. The information for each individual is registered on a card. The number of units is small. The classification for variables is done readily; ordering the cards in groups and categories is the result. It is recommended for use for fewer than 500 cases and not fewer than 12 units.

Mechanized. The tallying and printing of results can be obtained by computers.

Presentation of data

It consists in giving the data in a summary form, which is objective and understandable. The most common forms are tables, charts and graphs.

Tables. Here are the principal parts of a statistical table: Title; contents: what, how, when and where. It has to be short and concise

Charts. They contain files and columns in qualitative and quantitative scales. Source and explanatory notes. They should appear at the bottom of the charts.

Graphs. The principal kinds of graphs are:

- Bar graphs. This is used to preset the distribution of frequencies of variables of nominal and ordinal scales. The length of the bar indicates the frequencies; the width the constant
- Double bars. They present data of association of two qualitative scales
- Sector Diagrams. It is used for the purpose of comparisons. It presents absolute or percentage figures in which 1% correspond to 3.61 of a circle

- Histograms. This is similar to bar graphs but without spaces between one and the other bar. It presents the distribution of frequencies in a quantitative and continuous scale
- Polygon of frequencies. This presents the comparison of distribution of frequencies in continuous scales in which the points are united with a line without interruption
- Diagram of correlation. It is employed for the study of the relation of variables in the continuous scale. The axes are of the same size and only points are placed
- Pictograms. These are used for publicity and are represented with figures which indicate quantities

5.5. Results

The results of the research are incorporated into a document which usually is the research information.

5.5.1. *Research Information*

In the same manner as the design of the research, there exist multiple and diverse forms of presenting the research results. The detailed information contains the following aspects: preliminary section, the section of information and the section of references and appendices.

Preliminary section:

- Front page
- Acknowledgements
- Prologue
- Index of content
- List of tables

Information section:

- Introduction. It includes: general context, problem, questions proposed, the limitation and definition of the problem, objects of the study or hypotheses
- Theoretical Framework. It includes: operational concepts, theories and their relation to the problem, motive of the study, critical summary
- Methodology. It includes: hypotheses, variables, indicators and categories, methodology, documentary investigation, research field, exhibit, gathering of data, limits in the gathering of data,

description of instruments for the gathering, systematization of data and formula

- Results. These include: the graphic presentation of the results grouped by categories of analysis, proof of hypotheses and theoretical-practical comparison
- Conclusion. It includes: the summary of findings and suggestions
- Proposals. These include: theoretical arguments, methodological arguments, graphic design of proposal and preliminaries

Section of References and appendixes:

- Bibliography
- Newspapers
- Instruments utilized in the gathering of data
- The design of the research
- Tables not included in the body of the information

5.5.2. *Rules to develop the information*

In the redaction and style of the information it is convenient to pay attention to the following recommendations:

- Use clear, simple and precise language
- Describe and explain
- Eliminate the use of personal pronouns
- Make uniform the agreement in the use of the verbs
- Do not employ abbreviations
- Revise the draft and orthography
- Good presentation
- Use the established margins: upper margin, 1.5 in.; lower margin, 0.75 in.; left margin, 1.5 in.; right margin, 1 in.
- Write the text in double space
- Use footnotes and give credit to quotations
- Number the pages at the right hand side

5.6. Proposals derived from the study

The last stage of research consists in making use of the results in order to propose, forecast, argue, describe or explain, according to the case.

What is truly important in the scientific process is to see viable solutions to the problem that gave origin to the study. In general,

the proposal of solutions do not form part of the scientific method. The research work is considered inconclusive when there are no proposed theoretical practical solutions to the problem. In order to present the proposed solutions it is convenient to include:

- Theoretical argumentation
- Methodological argumentation
- Preliminary Solutions

Translation: ROLANDO DELAGOZA SOLLEZA, C.M.

Electronic Sources for Vincentian Studies

by John E. Rybolt, C.M.

The great advantage of modern technology for Vincentian Studies has been the development by the Congregation of various electronic sources. This has brought to researchers anywhere with access to the Internet a wealth of texts that previously could have been found only in specialized libraries. In providing this material, the Congregation has only been doing what many others are also doing. While there are many documents and encyclopedias accessible on the Internet that have some relationship to Vincentian life, there are thousands of documents still to be made available. This survey presents only a selection of the most valuable ones currently available or projected for the future. This area of research is developing rapidly.

Sources pertaining to Saint Vincent de Paul

The most important of these sources is the fourteen volumes of the writings of Saint Vincent edited by Pierre Coste. It is thanks to the initiative of Claude Lautissier in Paris, helped by a group of dedicated persons, Daughters of Charity, Vincentians, and laity (including his sister), that we have these texts. They are available in French. In addition, the so-called Volume 15, published by André Dodin as part of his series in *Mission et Charité*, has also been digitized, thereby completing what was known to be available some thirty years ago. A preliminary appendix, Volume 16, is in the stages of preparation by Georges Baldacchino in Paris. It contains new materials that have come to light since Dodin's publication in 1970.

The Spanish translation of Coste's *Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents* has also been prepared in digital format. So far, it has not been made available on the Internet, but it likely will be in the coming months.

The English translation of the same work will also be made available to researchers through a new website sponsored by DePaul University in Chicago. Its web address is: <<http://via.library.depaul.edu>>.

The Province of Turin, the repository of a large collection of the original correspondence of Saint Vincent, has prepared an elegant CD with photographs of the original texts, along with the printed versions in French and Italian. The CD can be obtained by contacting the provincial secretary. It may be hoped that the other major collections can do something similar, thereby allowing researchers access to the original texts through the miracles of electronic means.

The first biography of Vincent de Paul, by Louis Abelly, has been available for many years in a facsimile edition, prepared in Piacenza. Printed and bound copies are easily attainable from the General Curia or from the Paris province. In addition, it is now available in digital format, thanks again to Claude Lautissier's team. It will appear on the DePaul University site. The English translation of Abelly's work is likewise available in digital format and will be on the same website. The Spanish version of the same biography has also been digitized.

The first edition of Abelly was published in 1664, but many found it too long and difficult to read. As a result, the author published a second edition in 1667. He eliminated about one third of the material while reworking nearly every page in some way. This important second edition is also available in digital format, and it will be placed on the DePaul University site. It has not been translated from the original French.

Coste's *Monsieur Vincent. Le grand saint du grand siècle*, has been digitized and will be put up on the DePaul University website, both in French and English.

Other biographies are available as well. De Broglie's *Saint Vincent de Paul*, Paris, 1900, is already available on-line in Google Books. Arthur Loth's *Saint Vincent De Paul et sa Mission Sociale* (Paris, 1880) is now completed, minus its lavish illustrations, and will be on the DePaul website. As for so many others, we owe our thanks to Pierre Willemet of the motherhouse in Paris for its preparation. The Spanish original and the French translation of José María Román's biography of Saint Vincent are also available in digital format.

There are a vast number of studies, several hundred, on Saint Vincent already digitized, far too many to list here. Nevertheless, a sample will illustrate what is available. From the pen of André Dodin we have some forty texts on all aspects of the founder's life and spirituality. The same is true with studies by Pierre Debognie and Pierre Coste, about ten different works. Alphonse Feillet's *La Misère au temps de Saint Vincent* (Paris, 1868) has been partially digitized to present the most important chapters dealing directly with Saint

Vincent. Many others, such as Claude Lautissier, Robert Maloney, Luigi Mezzadri, Joseph Parrang, Miguel Pérez Flores, and Jean-Pierre Renouard, have enriched our library of sources and their materials will gradually be made available on the DePaul University website. In the meantime, they are also available through direct contact with Claude Lautissier.

Sources pertaining to the Congregation of the Mission

The most important of all these sources concerning the life and history of the Congregation, including many studies about the Daughters of Charity, is the *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission*. DePaul University has digitized this amazing collection, in 127 volumes, and it will be available on the University's website. It is also searchable, in that any word or phrase can be searched in the texts. The valuable volumes of indices form part of this series, as well as the typed index to the volumes published in the twentieth century. The *Annales* were also translated into various languages, Spanish, Italian, Polish, English, German, but these are not yet available. The English series will be digitized in the near future. These editions are not entirely a translation from the French original, since gradually original material was included that normally pertained to the ministries and the history of the provinces.

A second major source, already digitized, is the *Catalogue du Personnel*, dating from 1853. The first hundred years will soon be available on the DePaul website. The importance of this source for Vincentian history cannot be minimized, even though the data found there are not always correct nor complete.

Claude Lautissier and his team have also given us the three volumes of the circular letters of the superiors general, from Saint Vincent through Eugène Boré, 1878. John Rybolt has completed what was only a selection of the more important circulars, and this enlarged version will take its place beside other major historical sources.

Pierre Coste was the author of the major catalogue of the members of the Congregation from the time of Saint Vincent until 1800. This catalogue has been prepared in digital fashion, and its many defects have been corrected, thanks to the patient researches of many other confreres. An important series prepared in Poland has been compared with this catalogue, and the revised catalogue, *Catalogue du Personnel de la Congrégation de la Mission (Lazaristes) depuis l'origine (1625) jusqu'à la fin du XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1911) will also be made available to researchers on the DePaul website.

Many other important sources, such as the *Acta Apostolica, Bullæ, Brevia et Rescripta in Gratiam Congregationis Missionis* (Paris, 1876), the *Répertoire Historique* (Paris, 1900), and the *Actes du Gouvernement Français concernant la Congrégation de la Mission* (3rd ed., Paris, 1902) are also available. These documents, along with many others, will help to open to researchers from the entire world the richness of Vincentian materials.

A major work of research into the legislation of the Congregation, the “Corpus Constitutionum Congregationis Mission,” prepared by the author of this report, contains the most complete series of legal texts governing the Congregation. These are principally the Common Rules, in various forms and languages, along with the Constitutions from all periods. Like the other texts, the DePaul website will post these texts.

A text prepared from a typescript of the minutes of the General Assemblies from 1661 through 1931 offers an excellent source for researchers. The text, almost exclusively in Latin, will appear on the DePaul site.

Sources pertaining to the History of the Congregation of the Mission

Besides the general sources listed above, there are also many other sources concerning the history of the Congregation. In particular, these sources deal with the history of individual countries or provinces. There is a vast amount of material now available concerning China. Gradually, as they become available, other valuable texts on individual provinces will be posted. It is foreseen that the major history of the Congregation now being prepared will also have a website attached, where further important documentation, maps and illustrations will also be found.

Other publications in series

Besides the *Annales* mentioned above, other publications are, or soon will, become available to researchers. *Vincentiana* is being posted on the Internet in the three official languages of the Congregation, French, Spanish and English. They are found on <<http://www.famvin.org/>>. This is a current and ongoing project. *Vincentian Heritage*, the publication of the Vincentian Studies Institute of the United States, has been digitized and is available on the DePaul University site. *Colloque*, a publication of the Irish province, has likewise been prepared digitally and will be made available to readers.

Images

A very large selection of images of Saint Vincent de Paul can be found at <http://stvincentimages.cdm.depaul.edu/>. The site arranges more than 10,000 images of Saint Vincent according to media (engravings, portraits, paintings, statues and sculpture, windows) and under these categories generally by the countries in which the originals of the images are to be found. It is planned for the future that further categories will appear, such as Vincentian sites, Vincentian persons (saints, blessed, members of the Congregation, superiors general), and materials pertaining to Saint Louise de Marillac. The site welcomes submissions of photographs for inclusion and attribution.

Conclusion

With the ease of digitizing materials, it can be hoped that other provinces or groups of provinces will make their materials accessible in digital format, both for their own members and for their confreres and others. The Congregation's desire to be of service to the poor can also be understood as being of service to poor confreres or provinces with only minimal access to the important sources of Vincentian life. As the introduction to the Constitutions states concerning its own reflections and studies:

The Congregation considers it necessary to go back to its roots, and to St. Vincent's lifelong conversion and original vision, so that it may continue to witness to its role within the Church. This is how it seeks to affirm more forcefully, and loyally maintain, its original identity and the spirit of its Holy Founder, and to draw greater inspiration from these sources. In this way, attentive to the will of God, it seeks to respond to its calling which is manifested in a special way, today as in St. Vincent's time, in the needs of the poor.

Thematic History

by Benito Martínez Betanzos, C.M.

HISTORY

Since the theme I have been asked to develop is Thematic History, I think I should begin by saying what I understand by history. Although some of these points have been treated in detail by Fr. Olabuenaga when speaking of Methodology, I think it is necessary to recall them as an introduction to Thematic History, for many of these concepts are being discussed by modern historians.

At the present time there is an infinity of ideas about the definition of history and its study, as many as there are schools or methodological tendencies among historians. Indeed, lately historical study has undergone a profound renovation both in theory and content as well as in methodology. The internet has also entered into history questioning it and obligating it to look over its access to the sources and information; and the historian finds himself subjected to a continual process of *recycling*.

The majority of modern historians try to explain that the history of the past is not something static, like a series of slides projected on a wall which we look at seated in our armchairs. Today history is presented as something dynamic, something in movement; and for that very reason there are historians who think that history only has activity and dynamism if it is given a socio-economic dimension. For if history is about the evolutionary processes of a past age, then one must bring to the foreground the demographic phenomena, the economic and social structures, the civilizations, the ideologies, or as is commonly said, the mentalities. In this way history is close to sociology. Before getting to the qualitative, it looks for the quantitative through statistics, charts and graphical curves which give direction to the numbers. It is believed that only in this way is history a science; for there is no more science except what can be measured and counted.

And so we have to ask ourselves what characterizes history and its study today? One characteristic of modern history is that its object takes in areas once considered forgotten or marginalized by the "traditional history" which centered almost exclusively on political, military and diplomatic phenomena. Today history is marked

essentially by the primacy of economic and social factors, with political history relegated to a second plane.¹

Another characteristic of modern historiography is the diversity of ideas about temporality, about what past time is because the phenomena studied by history are situated in past time. This is still one of the major themes that occupy the reflection of contemporary historians. What is the dimension of historic time in which the facts related are developed? Is the object of history just the human past, or is it also the historical present? Is history the knowledge of the human past, or of men in time, or the science of historic time?

Historic temporality is a serious problem, above all, for post-modern historians and for others who dedicate themselves to studying contemporary history considering that contemporary times only take in the *current history of the world* (which includes from the end of World War II in 1945 up to our times), or the *immediate history of the world* (around the last 30 years) or the *history of the present* (the time in which it is supposed the last witnesses of the occurring facts will live). These historians give to time the only value it should have — they say — of the continuity of the present which incessantly becomes the past and is in continual change. Some attack these historians saying their work is journalism more than history; and one cannot confuse the historian with the journalist, because the *historian, [is] different from the journalist, and outside the epoch he is analyzing, and although he may also work with the concepts of temporality and change, tries to exhaust the sources of what he is studying; he analyzes, interprets and treats the study of the historical facts with a sense of context and synthesis.*² That is to say the historian also tries to relive the past in the present, but with a serious scientific methodology.

Another discussion in vogue among historians today is about the value which must be given to *objectivity*, that is about the different ways of thinking about what is the truth and what is objective while investigating in the documents what happened and how it happened, for one may look upon the facts investigated in a different way. But we will examine this point more carefully later on, as well as the relationship between the action of the individual and social structures, between the particular and the general.

¹ RODRIGO AHUMADA DURÁN in *Revista Communio*, Santiago Chile, 1999, no. 2, pgs. 87-107 (web).

² ALICIA ALTED VIGIL - JUAN A. SÁNCHEZ BELÉN, *Métodos y Formas de investigación en historia moderna y contemporánea*, Ed. Unversitaria Ramón Areces, Madrid 2005, p. 140.

Finally, and perhaps one of the most interesting points for us to bear in mind may be the different *methodologies* which the investigator may employ and the value he attributes to them, that is to say the techniques we use as we investigate the documents and as we present and write the history, with the narration at the center of the discussion. All these aspects involve a notable difficulty for establishing classifications, sequences and consequences since the schemes used by modern historians are very different, says Vidal Jiménez.³

The School of Annales and the New History

Although Fr. Olabuenaga has also spoken about it, I am going to briefly recall some ideas about how the different conceptions of History have come about in the historiographic panorama of recent years. I think that may facilitate a better understanding of Thematic History and of the methodology which must be used in its investigation.

One cannot avoid starting with Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886). With Germanic dedication and precision he laid the foundation for historic methodology, firstly, by passionately seeking "the original source" in order to carry out afterwards a strict critique of the documents. He is thus the first representative of "*historical positivism*." Bearing in mind the dynamic of the documentary sources in which Ranke so insisted, in 1929 Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Georges Lefebvre began a new stage in the study of history, founding the magazine *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, over against the traditional or narrative history. New ideology and new methodology are used, thus giving birth to the so called *Nouvelle Histoire* of the past century in which we discover two characteristics: on the one hand, new methods of investigation basing themselves in the serious and deep investigations of historical positivism which many prefer to call *methodic* investigation and on the other hand allying themselves with the social sciences, which some Marxist oriented historians have taken to the extreme of historical materialism and the class struggle. The golden age of this historical current arrives in the 60's and 70's of the past century when Fernand Braudel had taken over the direction of *Annales*.

³ RAFAEL VIDAL JIMÉNEZ, "La Historia y la Postmodernidad," in *Espéculo. Revista de estudios literarios*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, no. 13 (November 1999 - February 2000).

According to these guidelines, it could be said that until the arrival of the new era in the last quarter of the past century — which began to be called postmodernist, the historiography of the modern tradition was rationalist and it assumed, as principles, the search for complete objectivity, the universality and unidirectionality of the human past; that is, the possibility of establishing, among the phenomena being studied, how some events are the causes of others, all of this within the overview of history which could give a global sense to human experience.

However, since the decade of the 80's of the past century, the criticism of this methodical and rationalist current of history has increased to the degree that Pierre Vilar says that the *Annales* school, i.e. *social history with its radical and unidirectional objectivity*, has died. Dead or not, one must confess that almost all Western historians were influenced by its ideas.⁴ These ideas I would classify in this way: 1) resounding criticism of classical narrative history, 2) placing socio-economic history as the center of history, 3) rigorous methodology taken from historical positivism, 4) more or less structuralism, according to the epoch of the magazine, in many historians of the *Nouvelle Histoire*, 5) historical materialism which brings with it a Marxist interpretation of history, and 6) what may most interest us in this conference, a preponderance of Thematic History within, certainly, total or global history.

And so, taking into account two aspects of this concept of history, namely, first, Thematic History which some consider “a growing fragmentation of history into multiple objects and methods,” and second, “the proposal on the table to integrate without further ado history with the closest social sciences” — it is logical for the historian Barros to wonder: does not today demand a common redefinition, according to the *Nouvelle Histoire*, of the reason for being of the historian beyond his methods and the object of his work? Or is one to understand that the crisis does not affect the conception of history which in its day the *Nouvelle Histoire* proposed, even though its founders were not philosophers of history?

Recently doubts have arisen among new historians with regard to the scientific status of history and with regard to history as problem as a substitute for history as narrative in the form of narration and

⁴ See, otherwise, the guidelines they give to future historians PIERRE GUIRAL - RENÉ PILLORGET - MAURICE AGHULON, *Guide de l'Étudiant en Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, PUF, Paris 1971. For a broader vision, cf. CARLOS BARROS, “La Nouvelle Histoire y sus Críticos,” *Manuscripts* (Revista del Department d'Historia Moderna i Contemporània de la UAB), no. 9, 1991, pgs. 83-111.

they make clear that to renounce the narrative is to renounce the specificity of history. There are historians, like Coutau-Begarie⁵ who call for the return to a narrative, biographical, diplomatic, military history as an alternative school to the *nouvelle histoire*, or who defend, like Pierre Renouvin, a history of international relations. But, keep in mind this intent to return to narrative history is not in opposition to thematic history.

From the years when post-modernism was at its height, some historians have arisen declaring that the historical is a way of thinking exclusive to modernism and does not make so much sense in our post-modern world. Historians appear who propose new ways of conceiving and doing history, giving to the objectivity, the universality and the temporality of the past a sense more relative and individual and not so rational or scientific. And these historians defend the fact that the interpretation which the historian gives to phenomena of the past is always influenced by an infinity of circumstantial factors which complete it, clarify it and can even modify it — *factors such as religious affiliation, educational traditions, territorial solidarities, the customs that give rise to the professions, the mentality of each generation and even sexual relationships*. This is the “new cultural history,” and in a certain way, “microhistory.”

That is to say that the diversity of interpretations springs from the responses which are given to questions like these: What is history — a science or an intelligible kind of social knowledge? What is the object of history? Is it possible to arrive at the truth in the field of intelligibility? What is the work of the historian? What is a document and what is its epistemological function? What are the distinctions and what are the relationships between history and the social sciences? These are *fundamental* matters that the historian cannot evade if he does not want to “mortgage” the objectivity or the “limits of the objectivity” of his own knowledge (AHUMADA DURÁN).

A Simple Definition

I, a simple scholar, without getting into the maze of schools, systems and the philosophy of history, and recognizing that Thematic History is done today on the bases of new approaches, perspectives and sources, present to you some ideas which those who wish to study Vincent, the Congregation and Vincentiana should not overlook.

⁵ HERVE CONTAU-BEGARIE, *La phenomena “nouvelle histoire”. Strategie et ideologie des nouveaux historiens*, Economica, Paris 1983.

If we consider the history of the facts or events of personal, familial, community, social, national or universal life as facts which existed and were real in another time, for example what Vincent, St. Louise, Ozanam, the missionaries or the poor did, one can say that *history is the period within which it is possible to obtain or reconstruct a trustworthy account of the events which affected a human group*. If it is considered as the study or investigation of a time period, then history is *the study of the social processes which explain the events and tendencies of the past, which helps us to understand the present and try to anticipate better the future*, for example of the Congregation of the Mission. This is what the Spanish philosopher Zubiri said: *the human person, upon entering into himself, finds himself being what he is because he had a past and is realizing himself in light of the future; and history, as a science, is much more a science of the present than of the past, for the human person is a historical being who is constantly changing reality by means of his freedom, carrying out historical events, and in doing so he is in some way acting upon the future as well.*⁶ That is to say, that history is my life, or expressed in a way that takes in the present, my life is an ongoing history.

These ideas will be very much discussed and criticized by the historians of the latest schools of thought, but I think they are classic ideas and understandable to the majority of those of us here present. The historian Joan Pages begins an article, which I cite below in a note, with a phrase from Marc Bloch which can capture everything said previously: “The lack of understanding of the present stems fatally from the ignorance of the past. But it is perhaps no less vain to worry about understanding the past while knowing nothing of the present.”⁷

THEMATIC HISTORY

With these ideas more or less respected, I think the second point would be to clarify what I understand by Thematic History, which is the title of the work SIEV has charged me with. Thematic History was in vogue some twenty-five years ago, without meaning to say by that that it no longer interests historians. On the contrary one must affirm that it has opened the way to new currents of history, from the

⁶ XAVIER ZUBIRI, Prologo a la Primera Edición de *Historia de la Filosofía* de Julián Marías, *Revista de Occidente*, Madrid 1967, p. xxiv.

⁷ MARC BLOCH, *Apología de la historia*, Empúries, Barcelona 1984, p. 37, citado por JOAN PAGÈS, “La comparación en la enseñanza de la historia,” en *Clio y Asociados*. “*La Historia enseñada*,” no. 9-10 (2005-2006).

time Braudel took over the direction of *Annales*, although his epistemology has certainly received a fair bit of criticism, some of it well deserved.

Thematic History is very much in consonance with the tendencies of present day society so inclined to substantial changes which lead, even in history, to specialization in one area or theme. The Congregation of the Mission is too big and the history of the Vincentian institutions too extensive to be treated as a whole. Indeed the schools of History of many universities configure their departments into thematic studies so that students may choose: economic and social history, the history of political and administrative institutions, the history of religions, of international relations, etc. And bookstores, publishers and libraries organize themselves according to the different themes of history.

Considering now the nature of what can be considered Thematic History, with some frequency the idea may occur to us that Thematic History is opposed to Chronological History. I think this is not so. Moreover, many Chronological Histories are also thematic; and it is easy to find *Chronological Histories of...* whatever theme: drugs, migrations, missions, seminaries, retreats to ordinands; and more concretely, the history of these themes in different countries or places. Therefore, when writing the biographies of St. Vincent or St. Louise or the Superiors General it is very common to place an appendix with the chronology of the political, religious and social events of the epoch. The opposition between theme and chronology may have come to us because many biographies and Chronological Histories of historic figures seemed like annuals which related the history of the person's life year by year from birth to death, or they presented to us chronologic narrative of facts, foundations, activities and even documents without showing any connection between them and without analyzing the causes and motives which gave rise to such happenings nor the basic reasons which caused them to be related. They were simply a narrative of the seminaries, the missions of the Congregation in different countries, from their origins or birth up to the present day. But Thematic History tends to investigate in depth a matter about which we can draw some response to the current problem. In the modern era almost no historian opposes Thematic and Chronologic History, for a Thematic History, as is that of the Congregation, of the seminaries, of the missions in general must take into account the times and the geography.

When I speak of Chronological History I do not refer to history as proposed by St. Augustine, giving it a Judeo-Christian vision with an apocalyptic direction; a linear or cyclical vision of history which begins with God the Creator and ends with God the Judge of all

humanity, and therefore of history. According to this history, human beings are instruments of God and follow his providence, but they are not the protagonists of history. The protagonist is God. Although reading St. Vincent, it may at times seem to us to be reading a providentialist, this vision of history ended with the Renaissance, which placed the human person as the center and author of history and above all, from the 18th century when history began to be considered as a science more than a literary narration even though this too sought objectivity. You will say no one is now capable of following this conception of history. True, but do not forget that in some environments, a certain fundamentalist traditionalism is being revived; and in others, with an air of biblical or scientific research, the theory of the so called *intelligent divine design*.

Thematic History – Overall History

What Thematic History is opposed to is a traditional vision of some historians who only pay attention to the political, military and diplomatic aspects within the spheres of kings and their courts, while today greater importance is given to the history of civilizations, of thought, and above all to the economic and social, that is to say, the human sphere. And if Thematic History is not opposed to Chronological History, even less does it confront Overall History. It is true that, in contrast to Overall History — what some call global or general history — Thematic History concerns itself with certain moments, themes or fields which the historian has selected because they are significant and because they lead us to know the facts, affairs and phenomena which place their stamp on an epoch: social, economic or religious themes, or those of spirituality and human rights which in some way have to do — in our case — with Vincentian themes, the Congregation and the poor. It does not forget geography and the chronology itself, because every phenomenon occurs within an historical context of time and place; and it does not forget either the theoretical and concrete context of Overall History, i.e. the history of why and how some past events have marked an epoch, have been consigned in some documents and have defined in some way the lives of their contemporaries. There are some very concrete historic themes which affect and interest us Vincentians in order to reflect on their effect on evangelization and the service of the poor in past epochs, it is true, but which make us analyze their possible repercussion and application in the present, as long as we do not convert history into an auxiliary science to sociology or anthropology.

“Bloch, Febvre, Braudel, working together on the magazine ANNALES, were the ones who gave the greatest impulse to Thematic History in the years 1930 to 1950. But these same authors and others more recent such as Duby and Le Goff, put historians on guard against any attempt to separate Thematic History from Overall History”⁸ so as not to dismember it. The fact is, in reality, Thematic History is either included within General History, collaborating with other human sciences, or it becomes an Encyclopedic Dictionary of History with no life or connection between the articles, that is, it becomes an archipelago of little “histories” that are like islands with no communication with one another. In this case, *“history is not a coherent discipline; not only because it may be less than the sum of its parts, but more because there is not even a whole, but only parts.”*

It is the accusation Dosse directs against those who wish to convert history into a *history of little pieces*.⁹ “History is a process and one fragment cannot be isolated from the process and studied in an isolated way... everything is interconnected” said Ved Mehta.¹⁰ This is the defect that Andre Dodin imputes to the Life of St. Vincent written (1860) by Ulysse Maynard: “Better suited to showing the continuity of the works (of St. Vincent) in time, than to illuminating the connection between the works and the economic, literary and spiritual situation, little studied at that time, Maynard inevitably isolates his hero and thus deprives him of his beautiful and precious humanity.”¹¹ A similar defect may be attributed to Pierre Collet with regard to his life of St. Vincent from 1748. Despite going through an enormous amount of documents which were presented for the

⁸ Cf. the article of VITTORIA CALVANI, “Storia settoriale contro storia generale? Un conflitto insensato,” in *RES* no. 24 (October 2002), pgs. 8-13. In October of 2005 Caroline Jouneau-Sion summarizes the debate among the authors of the book *1515 et les grandes dates de l’Histoire de France*, moderated by Alain Corbin and published by Clio; they are concerned by the abandonment of chronology in teaching, and she emphasizes that for Marc Ferro, one of the authors, “Thematic history, which was once fashionable, could lead to reflection about the past, but it has upset the sense of chronology. And should only be done when the occasion presents itself.” In another place she cites Braudel: “Against those who hold for an autonomous history of each area, Lucien Febvre urges us to reclaim the rights of overall history, attentive to the totality of life, from which no one can be separated, unless it is done arbitrarily.”

⁹ FRANÇOIS DOSSE, *La historia en migajas*, Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, Valencia 1989.

¹⁰ Cited by RICHARD J. EVANS in the Introduction to EDWARD H. CARR, *¿Qué es historia?*, p. 43.

¹¹ ANDRÉ DODIN, *San Vicente de Paúl y la caridad*, CEME, Salamanca 1977, p. 183.

canonization of the Saint and being very respectful of his sources, we read that Life as a chronicle of St. Vincent de Paul isolated from his historical context. On the other hand, although I am not in agreement with some of his points and the focus he gives to others, the *Vida del Señor Vicente de Paul* by Fr. Jaime Corera (1988) presents St. Vincent year by year; but it is not a simple chronology of his life; for in a certain way, it tries to center it within the context of 17th century France.

For all of these reasons, it is a good idea to establish that by Overall History one does not understand just social history, a sense which many historians today give it. However there would be no great difficulty in giving the primacy to the social aspect if it were not for the fact that the term “social” is politicized generally with a tilt to the left. For all history is social, because in the final analysis it is dominated by the socio-economic. And so Ahumada Duran writes: “According to the historiographic-methodological project developed by Fernand Braudel: ‘History is destined to become a kind of *super* discipline, guiding and unifying all the other social sciences which converge in the understanding of the human phenomenon (sociology, anthropology, economics, demography, etc.), by way of the idea of *historic temporality*. Today this aspiration is very far from becoming a reality. On the contrary, the tendency we observe is just the opposite: *history* has been transformed into sociological history, anthropologic history, economic history or demographic history.’”¹²

On the other hand, when it is said that Thematic History should fit into Overall History, one must be careful not to study the theme of history as part of a systematic history where all the events of the theme are considered as “a part rooted within” an already predetermined global system: traditionalist or progressive, authority or freedom in the case of our Congregation, and whose interpretation should serve to justify the system. Even less should a theme be chosen to express with it an ideology with the intention of indoctrinating the readers.

When it is said that Thematic History should fit within Overall History the idea is that a history must be written in which the chosen theme takes into account all its relationships with the ideas, facts and situations which explain it, clarify it and give it objective sense. Let us take an example.¹³ Many Spanish missionaries have considered

¹² RODRIGO AHUMADA DURÁN en *Revista Communio*, Santiago Chile, 1999, no. 2, pgs. 87-107 (photocopy).

¹³ BENITO PARADELA, C.M., *Resumen histórico de la Congregación de la Misión en España, desde 1704 a 1868*, Madrid 1923, pgs. 216 s., 241 s. and 383-392.

Fr. Etienne's actions with the Spanish province a clear injustice on the part of an absolutist and dominant Superior General. One can study the theme of *those relationships*: but if they are not fitted into the framework of the Overall History of the 19th century, one cannot arrive at a very objective consideration. Therefore one must take into account, on the one hand, the French invasion in the time of Napoleon and the anti-French atmosphere within the Madrid government and people. One must also consider that the Daughters of Charity, for the Spanish king and his ministers, were a state company similar to the army, doctors and professors, with an internal seminary funded by the government for the recruitment of sisters. And the Visitor of the Vincentian priests was the Director and Superior of these Daughters of Charity and could not be subject to Paris. On the other hand, one must consider that, after Napoleon, the Province of Spain was for many years dependent, by order of the Holy See, on an Italian Vicar who lived in Rome and not on the Superior General who resided in Paris. In the same way one must consider that, according to the mentality of the Madrid government, the Visitor of Spain asked for and even demanded from Fr. Etienne powers similar to his own. There was danger of a secession of the Spanish Province from the universal Congregation. And so Thematic History must take into account Overall History; and if it does not there is created, in the words of the Italian historian Vittoria Calvani, a *senseless conflict*.

Therefore when investigating Thematic History one examines a series of documents about a concrete matter which indicate its direct or indirect, but close connection to any events, any dates or places, any ideologies or circumstances found in those documents or others which refer to the concrete and well defined theme we are treating. Thus the researcher discovers a close connection between historical facts, thematic thought, present day application and future projection.

In order to research a theme of history clear ideas are essential. For we are seeing that in these post-modernist years, while studying Thematic History, a confusing tension is created between globalizing tendencies and situations at the local, concrete, singular and well defined level, so well liked by post-modernist society where the fleeting, the subjective, the relative and the transitory are mixed with the concrete and singular. From this perspective, grand historiographic narratives now have no sense. Nevertheless and quite contrarily, even though the themes of history may be concrete, they are not singular, but rather particular with a more or less general projection.

Micro-history

Although Thematic History may not be identified with post-modernist micro-history, they can aid one another. Micro-history and micro-analysis have had and have great importance among some Italian historians. The most representative is Giovanni Levi. For him, *micro-history is essentially an historiographic practice more than a theory, although it may have multiple theoretical, and in a certain sense eclectic, references.* This way of doing history takes into account, above all, the methodology and intention of the historian who does not subject himself to any orthodox doctrine; he renounces prediction, the establishment of prior theoretical frameworks which subject the studied historical phenomena to preconceived direction. His objective is to understand and interpret — without being tied down by general laws — human actions and conflicts in their double autonomy. Without implying radical relativism, micro-history understands social reality not as a structure of universal objects, but rather as changing relationships within some contexts which are permanently adapting themselves. Two aspects should be emphasized:

The first has to do with the way of observing historical facts: it concentrates on concrete individuals inserted into local relationships, configured into what has been called “exceptional normal”; that is to say, the particular situations of everyday people or families which, after intense study, are considered useful for arriving at flexible generalizations relatively capable of being extrapolated to other areas of history in the present or the future. It is a continual to and fro between the particular and the global, between the anecdotal and the structural.

The second aspect refers to the idea of “context” which is no longer seen as a given social structure, but rather as an historical framework of changeable and not necessary social connections. In this sense, the analysis taken to the micro level leads from the structure to the particular set of circumstances and to the detail in order to return to the global. Its aim is to understand and interpret, without subjecting itself to universal laws, the human actions, conflicts and phenomena of common people who lived in the past. This point of view can be useful to us as Vincentians as we study certain themes or persons who may seem irrelevant to us.

Let us look at an example. Fr. Mitxel Olabuenaga in the defense of his doctoral thesis *Misiones Populares de la C.M. (España 1704-1975)* (*Popular Missions of the C.M., Spain 1704-1975*) tells us: “From the preparation in 1980 of the thesis for my Licentiate in Theology

Popular Missions of the C.M. Franco Era, we arrived at three conclusions: the extraordinary development the missions had in Spain in the post-war period, their evident decline during the 70's, and their interdependence with the socio-political situation. Together with these conclusions came two new questions: "What causes motivated such a situation? Have there been other similar moments in their history?" His intention was to give a present day answer with regard to the purpose for which St. Vincent founded us and to the mandate of Vatican II on the revision of our institutes, bearing in mind our origins and the secularized reality. For this end, Fr. Olabuenaga treats, examines and studies the missions in several larger cities in Spain, but also in the small, remote, nearly forgotten towns; and he studies them surely bearing in mind the good and extensive official documentation, ecclesiastical and civil periodicals, but also, and perhaps with greater impact, the brief and occasional memoirs of Vincentian missionaries unknown to those not related to the Congregation. It is a new way to do historical research — although some call it the history of popular culture — going out to the street and traveling through the countryside, seeing the problems and the customs of the simple people, visiting and seeing families and speaking with them. The historians who seek in archives documents about structures and personalities had forgotten that a part of the past continues to live in these small towns. And these historical sources so impacted the listeners that one of the members of the Tribunal before which he defended his thesis asked him in public to please lend him the documentation because *he deemed quite interesting the vision of the History of the 19th century developed from the point of view of the missions of the Catholic church*. That member of the Tribunal saw how a particular theme, perhaps insignificant for society as a whole, reaches a new social dimension as the historical framework in which its interrelation with other themes is examined. It seemed to me he was not so interested in analyzing the structures of the society as he was in the social dynamics that affected them and which the micro-analysis of the popular missions done by Fr. Olabuenaga had brought to light.

Once again I repeat that I am not trying to identify or even assimilate Thematic History with Micro-history or with the history of every day culture with its down to earth flavor, but rather confirm that the deductions and conclusions of particular or personal themes of the past which seem ordinary to us have general repercussions for Overall History.

The fact is that the "scientific" historian little by little has forgotten the human factor which is the basis of all history. The institutions and structures which should have been only the stage where

man makes history, had more importance than the actors. It is like giving all the importance to the study of the Constitutions and not to the persons who live them, or centering the missions in their methodology and not in the missionaries who give them and the people who receive them; it is looking exclusively at the structure of the seminaries and not at the missionaries who established them or the seminarians who lived in them. And so the historian Vicens Vives warns the philologists *that the word, the document "does not reflect the new reality it tries to define" for today's world; and he reminds the professionals of history that the institution is born, if not dead, at least static. Those who will give account of its vital content will be the men who struggled in it to carry out their ambitions.*

Real life is doubtless found in the great legislative collections, but also in the humble archives of the house of the missionaries or the seminaries they directed, or in parish archives, in the files where the buying and selling of houses or fields is registered, in the decisions of the tribunals, etc. Positivism, in its last derivations about the great collections of documents it published, was ready for sentencing, but not dead, for one cannot deny the great importance of these collections. When Febvre speaks of "Overall" History and Bloch of "human" history, they are sending the same message; because history, in Bloch's words, is "the science of men in time" or "a fragment of the universal march toward knowledge."¹⁴

Theme-ology

Let us not confuse Thematic History with theme-ology which has more to do with literature and music, and whose objective is to examine the theme of a literary or musical work. Theme-ology looks at the *motif* which contains musical or literary references. Perhaps the words which best capture Thematic history are matter, affair, theme. But theme-ology, although these terms may be applied to it, seeks to find those elements which have gone to create a literary form or inspire a musical motif. Certainly the theme of a novel — the tension between the plot and the sense the reader gives to a theatrical work, a poem may, for example, sink its roots in the autobiography of the writer, in the events of life, but always directed and focused by the imagination, fantasy, dreams, inspiration, etc. Clearly, theme-ology can deal with themes of history, sociology, economy or real life as does Thematic History, but not with the same exactitude,

¹⁴ See ANTONIO GABRIEL ROSÓN, *Sociedades Históricas y cambio en el tiempo*, p. 13, on the web page.

the objective seriousness or rigorous documentation with which Thematic History studies them, especially with regard to revealed religion. Historical truth is quite distant from literary truth, especially of the novel. That is to say, the term theme-ology remains at the level of the inseparable union between form and content or matter and style. Although the theme dealt with may be identical, there is not the same degree of truth in an historical novel about St. Vincent as a slave or as a galley slave as there is in a serious documented study about these same themes. It is true that the objective truth in history admits of multiple representations, according to the vision of the historian; but in this case, it is better to say that literature creates its truth, while history tries to describe the truth.

Thematic History helps to enter more deeply

Thematic history can be approached not only by researchers with degrees in history who wish to go more deeply into particular aspects of history, but also by students interested in a particular theme like those who begin to study some aspect of Vincentian history, since as time goes by or historians from other places become interested in it, forgotten things are discovered, other visions of some events are seen, new aspects come to light and themes known only superficially come to be known more deeply, as for example the economic situation of St. Vincent's family which could give us a very different vision of his priestly vocation than the one we have today, or the relationship between St. Vincent and Berulle and the influence the latter had on Vincent's holiness and spirituality, etc. Much has been said of St. Vincent's influence on St. Louise, but has her influence on him been studied? Because if it is true she idolized her Director and Superior, it is also true that she was an intelligent woman with a talent for solving social and community problems, with a very feminine ability to bring St. Vincent around to what she saw clearly; and St. Vincent, who loved her dearly in the Lord, knew it but hid the fact that he did. But it happened that they were both spiritual beings who loved the poor; and this, together with their search for holiness, joined them together. In all the biographies of St. Vincent his relationship with the Abbe Saint-Cyran is written about; but has his influence on St. Vincent, a truly strong and holy man, been studied? For the abbot, a strong personality as well, had an enviable formation in patristic and spiritual theology. And St. Vincent would say that conversing with him captivated, elevated and inflamed him. Their friendship was long standing and heartfelt; they even shared a common purse for a time and often ate together and visited one another. St. Vincent lent him a horse a short time before Saint-Cyran

was imprisoned. And although there was some tension between them and even a small confrontation because of the theological ideas which Saint-Cyran seemed to defend and which seemed doubtful to St. Vincent, neither of them ever wanted to break off their friendship. And when, by order of Richelieu, St. Vincent was called on with the intention of getting him to accuse his friend of heresy, he did not accuse him.¹⁵

And if we get into social matters, there are themes which concern us as Vincentians in such a way that we cannot get around them, and which our charism bids us to investigate more deeply today so as to find Vincentian solutions: immigration (the former war refugees), families fallen on hard times (the ashamed poor of the 17th century), children of the street or on the street (abandoned children of Vincent's time); as well as finding ways to resolve, or simply explain today's urgent problem of the lack of vocations, without disdaining more speculative themes such as unbelief or secular religiosity (libertines of the past), progressive or traditional spirituality (ongoing reflection of Jansenism). In this era of feminist movements and equal rights, it would also be fitting to respond to the following questions: why were Vincent's Charities only for women, when up to that time they had been only for men? How did he manage to get the Daughters of Charity tolerated and even accepted by civil and ecclesiastical authorities? Or in our times when so much is said of globalization and the identity of consecrated institutions, did St. Vincent copy from previous congregations the secular nature of the Missionaries? And if he changed something, why did he do so?

There are still many important themes to investigate regarding our Founder and about Vincentiana within the scope of Overall History. One could make a long list of interesting topics about the history of the Congregation, of the Company, of the seminaries or other ministries, whether by nations or by centuries, but always choosing concrete themes which concern us to see if we can give an answer to today's problems, without forgetting that the subject of history is the

¹⁵ Cf. PIERRE COSTE, *Le grand saint du grand siècle. Monsieur Vincent*, vol. III, Desclée de Brouwer et C^{ie}, Paris 1931, p. 135 ss. Four reasons lead me to accept as generally authentic the narrative of St. Vincent about the Abbe Saint Cyran (X, 107-112) even though it may have been manipulated in some points by the Jansenists: pointing out that St. Vincent was born in 1580 against what Abelly says; the fact that Richelieu did not introduce the saint's testimony in the dossier of accusations; the fact that the Jansenists contradicted the doctrine taught by the Abbe; and the fact that St. Vincent went to congratulate him when he got out of prison, thus indicating that he had not the least influence in his imprisonment because he did not testify against him.

individual person, certainly, but always inasmuch as he is a socially interrelated being. For example, I have still not found any modern study on the interrelationship of European missionaries and those of other continents which draws conclusions from a singular fact: there was a time when “centrifugal” Europe sent missionaries to other countries. Has the time come when “centripetal” Europe takes in missionaries from other places?

There is no doubt that the results of the study of these themes would be to give us some profound research and some ideas useful to the whole Vincentian Family. Although history is not, nor does it have the capacity to be, a visionary who predicts the future — because it is not a mathematical science; this way of writing Thematic History is widespread among important historians today whether in longer works or in essays, with the advantage that it helps us develop the sense of knowing how to differentiate the themes and their times, and to see as natural the change in institutions. In a word, it invites us to be creative.

Thematic Categories

Throughout this article I have given some examples. They are only examples. Nevertheless, for what I want to achieve in this article, I have thought it fitting to present how some historians of civil history with no relation to Vincentian institutions, group together, in a few broad sections, the many and distinct themes of so called universal history which are the object of study with the idea that in this way they are valid for all times, for all places and for all civil and religious institutions, but always with a connection to general history. In Spanish language historical writing I have hardly been able to find any model to clarify the ideas I have just expressed. Perhaps one of the easiest examples to apply in the research of those of us who are beginning Vincentiana studies is that of Josep Fontana¹⁶ who presents a Thematic History which covers the following areas, useful no doubt for all students of Vincentiana:

0. The Stage of History

1. The number of men: life, subsistence and death of human beings
2. The forms of subsistence: I. Agriculture

¹⁶ JOSEF FONTANA, *Introducción al Estudio de la Historia*, Editorial Crítica, Plaza edición, Barcelona 1999. I have taken many ideas from JOAN PAGÈS, *article cited*, in nt. 1, pgs. 17-35.

3. The forms of subsistence: II. Trade and markets
4. The forms of subsistence: III. Industry and economic growth
5. The forms of collective organization: I. Society
6. The forms of collective organization: II. State and Nation
7. The foundations of politics: violence and power
8. Ideas: I. Beliefs and religions
9. Ideas: II. Culture, civilization and science
10. Ideas: III. Popular culture, alternative culture

Fontana justifies his proposal with some remarks I find very much to the point: "The thematic criterion which has been adopted to formulate this list is that of choosing the great problems — not all, but those which struck us as the most representative — which affect the men and women who live in society, which is the subject about which history concerns itself. Problems which are of the past and of the present, and very likely of at least the immediate future, and which are considered in a temporal evolving perspective which history should have. Therefore we will take any of these great questions in a global way and we will analyze it in its evolution, not to do a complete study of it from its origins to the present day, but rather to show how this method of analysis can help to understand fundamental human problems.... Its purpose is to help combat the topics and prejudices which get in the way of understanding the world in which we live: stir one to think about history and the world personally, critically."

It should not surprise us that Fontana, focused on a *Nueva Historia Económica*, would give such importance to economic, social and demographic themes, since from the school of the *Annales* and the *Marxist* interpretation of history, economic history explains and embraces all the areas of social reality, endeavoring to make history pass from the individual fact to the collective one. They are the preferred areas of development in modern society and they are also the tendency of a way of writing history which tries to catalogue social realities in series in order to better measure them statistically. Although the research from past centuries will never be able to give us the desired statistical precision about production, there are authors, like Pierre Vilar, who say that it is possible, even for the 17th century, to find documentation which facilitates the drawing up of statistics about production in that century: by examining tithes, fiscal controls, salaries, rents, etc.¹⁷

¹⁷ PIERRE VILAR, *Crecimiento y desarrollo. Economía e historia. Reflexiones sobre el caso español*, Ed. Ariel, Barcelona 1974, pgs. 58-59.

This classification of themes should not upset us Vincentians; it should even make us happy, because, in the final analysis, the service and evangelization of the poor, on the one hand, is what identifies us and what makes us different from other religious institutions, and on the other hand, is the reason we have been founded. They are themes which are directed to the poor who are excluded from our society economically and socially; and may well be themes to be taken up by Vincentians in order to give a more universal projection to our studies, bringing to the general public a series of themes we studied only for ourselves.

History of the Congregation

It is time to set for ourselves the challenge of writing a History of the Congregation of the Mission, of the Company of the Daughters of Charity or of the Vincentian Family. Other congregations have them. Jose Maria Roman, John Rybolt and Luigi Mezzadri have worked or are working on this. We need this Overall History, for I have explained that Thematic History should take into account Overall History. It seems that what is happening is what I have mentioned: each province or country is writing its own history in isolation, without bridges to one another, like grains that do not form a loaf.

Or perhaps we should put together our universal history according to local themes, by countries or by provinces; and afterwards a commission of historians would compile the General History of the Congregation.

With regard to Vincentian themes, besides what I have cited throughout this article, yesterday Fr. Mezzadri spoke of "Nine Areas of Investigation for Vincentian Studies," as challenges which can attract our young researchers to work on this long awaited history, and as themes of the history of the missionaries which still need to be clarified.

The Biographies

Now that I have set forth these ideas on the diversity of themes to be chosen, I think I should dedicate a section to biography, and that for two reasons: because, in the end, biography is one of the themes that history encompasses; and secondly, because in our day there is great interest in biographies. Society is tired of collective protagonism, of collective tragedy, of social opulence, of anonymous history, and has an interest in personal, individual history, for the real life of each individual.

Biography chooses as a *theme* of history the life of a real person, usually dead, setting forth his achievements from birth to death. It is usually written in an expository or narrative form, usually in the third person. While dealing with it as a theme of history, I think there can be different classes of biography, not only in the external literary or audio-visual form, but also in its content, in the aspect the author most wants to emphasize, giving us as a result a psychological, social, cultural or political biography, etc.

In accordance with the idea of accepting particular themes within Global History, the biography of a person of the past should also explain his acts within the social, cultural and political context of his time, attempting to reconstruct through documents his thought and his impact. For we ought not to forget that history always takes into account the present looking towards the future. Thus, through knowing what other persons have lived through, we learn useful things for the present and the future. We can extract a teaching from the experience of other people, even if they are from other times. Furthermore, if the person written about is representative, for example, Saint Vincent or St. Louise, his life can give us an unequalled knowledge of the society of 17th century France in which he lived. This is what Coste attempted to do in his almost definitive Life of St. Vincent with the title *The Great Saint of the Great Century*. With a scrupulous methodology following the positivist or methodical school, he compiles and analyzes a rather exhaustive documentation. Nevertheless, for Fr. Andre Dodin, “he did not manage to integrate him into his historical milieu and he left him outside of the spiritual world of the 17th century.”¹⁸ This is what Fr. Jose Maria Roman has tried to correct in his life of St. Vincent, and what I have tried to keep in mind in the life of St. Louise de Marillac: that the two saints are protagonists of 40 years of French history.¹⁹

To this end, it is necessary that the biography be historical and not guided by remote control, like *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God, Vincent de Paul*, which Abelly published in 1664. A theologian more than a historian, despite wanting to be honorable and working from the oral and written documentation of his contemporaries, “he wrapped him all up in an edifying hagiographic style.” It was what the Superiors of the Congregation wanted so that the Life of the Saint would be the pious complement of the Rules and “the practical

¹⁸ ANDRÉ DODIN, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁹ BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., *Empeñada en un paraíso para los pobres*, CEME, Salamanca 1995; JOSÉ MARÍA ROMÁN, *San Vicente de Paul, I, Biografía*, BAC, Madrid 1981.

commentary on the Gospel,” according to Fr. Dodin. The same can be said of Gobillon’s *Life of the Venerable Louise de Marillac* (1676).

Another danger the biographer must watch out for is that, because of having great sympathy for the person he writes about, he offers a slanted vision of the Overall History through the life of his subject in order to extol him, especially when a theme is chosen in which to compare the action or life of the subject with the actions and lives of his contemporaries within some historical structures that were as they were and cannot be modified as we might have liked them.

To undertake the biography of St. Vincent, St. Louise, Blessed Ozanam or any other Vincentian figure is a great risk, because it obliges us to immerse ourselves in the serious study of the atmosphere and the mentalities of a past epoch, and because the historian is not without feelings and these can lead him to adopt a methodology which helps him to interpret the hypothesis he may have formulated, because he analyzes and interprets the documents according to his inclinations between macro and micro-history, and because he is influenced by his position as a Vincentian and his own ideology. And so we have biographies of St. Vincent as social revolutionary, politician, countryman, doctor, etc. One runs the risk of deforming or disfiguring the subject of the biography or turning him into a myth in which everything is directed towards his fulfilling the destiny he had before his birth. There is a danger of disfiguring the authenticity of real lives and their deeds. But by the same token one can run the risk, because of a wish to demythify the person, of disfiguring the truth and exaggerating what was not clear. And this risk is very real if it is a Vincentian or a Frenchman who is writing the life of St. Vincent, a very popular saint in France, and turned almost into an institution by the French state and church.

To avoid these dangers one must endeavor, in the first place, to not want to be original at all costs, but rather honest. And for that, it is absolutely necessary to have a thorough knowledge of the historical frameworks which help to explain the rise of the person. Secondly, one must take into account the personal idiosyncrasy and nationality of the biographer and his subject. How will a Spaniard study a Frenchman, a Frenchman a German, a German an Irishman or Englishman, and all of these an Italian? How will North or South Americans look at Europeans, or the latter at Americans, Asians, Africans or people of Oceania? All this means that, to write a biography, one cannot disregard history. The good biographer feels the obligation to be an historian; and without abandoning his subject, he rises above his own nationality, his sympathies as a human being and the currents of interpretation which, certainly, are always chosen by him.

Without doubt, in our day there are many novelized biographies which provide us with pleasant moments as we read of the vicissitudes of other human beings. But then that is not thematic or any other kind of history. It is the genre of fiction called the novel because it relates the real by means of the unreal or imaginary, manipulating its materials in order to achieve a literary result.

I think I should say that one can draw moral or spiritual lessons from the lives of many people. But biography cannot become edifying hagiography, falsifying the life of a person in which everything is holy. It is a common sin, from the *Parallel Lives* of Plutarch and the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* of Suetonius to *The Golden Legend* of Voragine, but also in the biographies of St. Vincent, St. Louise, Vincentian missionaries and Daughters of Charity, especially popular Lives written in the first half of the last century. It is a sin which Mezzadri has carefully avoided in his Short Life of St. Vincent.

Nevertheless, when writing the biography of a saint it is good not to confuse piety with spirituality. In the book *La Señorita Le Gras y Santa Luisa de Marillac* (1991), I chose one theme: analyze both the spirituality the saint lived and the one she inculcated in her Sisters. But since it was the spirituality of a woman, I had to study her life in order to explain her spirituality.

In our day, I think that, among ourselves, this sin has been overcome. Thanks to the methodology of methodic positivism, the concern for documentation about our saints, blessed, venerables, etc. has increased (the search for manuscripts, spiritual writings, diaries, correspondence, etc.) as the basis of the biographical narrative, as well as the concern to situate the subject in his/her authentic historical-social milieu. Yesterday Mezzadri spoke of the documents which concern Vincent and his thought. But we must be very careful, nevertheless, that the abundance of documentation not become the protagonist and drown the person who remains hidden behind the foliage, as happened with Coste, and which Fr. Dodin avoided in an original way in *St. Vincent de Paul and Charity* (1972).

Still and all, the biography should be pleasant to read, it should attract. And so it should be well written literarily, as long as the literary quality does not falsify the history. It would be good to bear in mind the advice of Soto Gamboa,²⁰ "In biography, just as in

²⁰ ÁNGEL SOTO GAMBOA (Reseña), "Gonzalo Vial. Pinochet. La biografía," *Historia UC*, no. 36 (2003), pgs. 450-458. In note no. 1 he clarifies: I owe these ideas to Alejandra Eyzaguirre, to whom I am very grateful for making available to me the manuscript *La biografía*. Santiago, Universidad de los Andes, 2001/2002. Unpublished work sponsored by FONDECYT, whose project is called: "Narración: ficción, historia y moral. Influjo recíproco de lo

historical discourse, the esthetic, scientific and ethical problem arises. Andre Maurois, the great French biographer, in *Aspects of a Biography* has posed the question about the knowledge of its methods and knowing where their value lies. For him, there can be a convergence between two aspects of biography: that it be true, i.e. documented and scientific, and at the same time, that it be a work of art. Both aspects are a real challenge for the historian who must use every documentary device at the risk of having his subject hidden by the documents that are his source. Maurois himself has pointed out that: "The search for truth is the work of the wise man; the expression of a personality is more the work of an artist." That means an historical theme, especially the biography of a human being, is beautiful if it distances us from a series of unconnected events and facilitates the deeper, organized and clearer understanding of what happened in the chosen theme or in the biography of the person. "To the patience of the scrupulous documentarian should be added the art of presentation."

It is what Fr. Corera, in his *Life of St. Vincent* and especially Jean Calvert in his literarily impeccable *Lives of St. Vincent and St. Louise*, have born in mind.

Research in Thematic History

Even though the methodology of history and the archives which must be consulted have been spoken about in this colloquy, I remind you that for Thematic History it is necessary to establish the theme, if necessary determine the geographic area in which the event occurs, and the time or dates: from which time and to which time one intends to cover the matter to be covered. That may require knowing and identifying the different categories of archives the historian needs to employ: for the Vincentian time period, the civil archives of Paris, those of the Mother House or of other religious congregations, for example, those of the Visitation or Salesian Sisters which surely must contain some conferences of the many St. Vincent gave as their superior, as well as many documents relating to the superior himself. For other time periods a little reflection will tell us which archives or documents we have to research so as to better discover, learn about and establish the correlation between the different themes of the historical research and the piles of documents. Do not forget that interesting documents can be discovered in almost unknown

ficticio y lo histórico en lo narrativo" (Narration: fiction, history and morality. Reciprocal influence of the fictional and the historical in the narrative).

archives. I would only add that it is the methodology that defines the historian and that differentiates good history from bad history.

Despite everything, I am going to dwell upon a few aspects: first, once the theme is chosen and the facts established just as we discover them in the documents, it is necessary to interpret them, relating them with one another, analyzing causes and effects, selecting those which strike us as most important to best develop the chosen theme. That is, to find the truth. But in Thematic History the objective truth does not interest one as much as the truth discovered by the historian. The *objective* truth is the historic fact just as it happened and which is written down as an historic fact (document, source). Thus it cannot be altered or modified. On the other hand, the *subjective* truth lies in how the historian understands the fact consigned in the sources and how he explains and narrates it. This relationship between the cold fact and the interpreted fact tends to be forgotten by the historians of the methodic school and their contemporary disciples. The objective truth concerning the events can be definitive, while the truth discovered by the historian as he interprets the facts can be sustainable or refutable.

I will give some examples: St. Vincent de Paul, within French culture and civilization of the 17th century, lived out in a concrete way his own vocation which led him to found the Charities, the Congregation of the Mission, and together with St. Louise de Marillac, the Daughters of Charity (they are objective truths). The historian who has chosen as his theme St. Vincent as founder interprets those facts and concludes that St. Vincent was a genius or a good copier of what already existed, that he was a man involved in social work or simply an evangelical saint (the truth discovered by the researcher). Another example: in the 19th century, the Vincentians directed a certain number of seminaries in France (objective truth); they directed them well or adequately or badly, it was worth the trouble or not, they produced some eminent priests, etc. (the truth discovered by the historian). In other words, the historian discovers the *manner* in which St. Vincent *lived in the world with sense and meaning*, instructing us for the present and the future.

Overall History, although it is permeated with subjective truth, generally affords us objective truth, while Thematic History, although it must always reflect objective truth, is generally permeated with the truth discovered by the historian through the three aspects of methodology that seem important to me in order to research Thematic History. I refer to hypothesis, constructing a model, and comparison.

The Historical Hypothesis

Fr. Olabuenaga has already clearly explained the idea of hypothesis and its qualities. I would only add that the hypothesis is a logical way the historian has of responding to a theme he proposes to investigate. When someone proposes to research a theme, aided by the methodologies of interpretation, by the available information and the elements common in other similar events, if there are any, he goes on to arrive at conclusions and possible answers to the questions posed by the investigation. He does so setting forth some hypothesis which he considers the true conclusion to the selection of the theme and to the organization done according to a plan. And then he dedicates himself to the task of gathering evidence and data which will permit him to either prove the viability of his hypothesis or reject it. For example: in 2006 I was asked to prepare something for the Vincentian Week in Salamanca on the theme "The Holiness of St. Vincent de Paul"²¹; and then I established a hypothesis: "St. Vincent's holiness was not the fruit of a conversion in the sense of a break with the past, but rather the natural evolution of his youthful piety." Then the work of investigation began in order to prove it. At the end of the investigation I could have arrived at two conclusions: the holiness of Vincent began with a conversion from a life of sin to another of sanctity. There was a break. And then I would have had to reject my first hypothesis and accept as a new hypothesis, the conversion. But during my research I thought I could prove with adequate arguments that his holiness was the fruit of the evolution of his youthful piety. And what began as a hypothesis turned into a study with conclusions that seemed serious and true to me.

How many themes in the form of hypothesis can be done today! For example, about the dark night St. Vincent went through between 1613 and 1617 about his dedication to the poor before Chatillon, about the discovery he made while a slave in Tunis or during his dark night that charity obliged him personally, about the idea he came to in Chatillon that charity, to be effective, must be done with team work, etc. Obviously, hypotheses that can be verified. It can be a particular hypothesis (applicable in a certain number of cases) or a universal one (applicable in all cases). But a singular hypothesis, i.e. one that works only in one case and cannot be more or less generalized, is no good. However, there are singular hypotheses that

²¹ BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., "La santidad en san Vicente de Paúl," in *Urgencias pastorales de la Familia Vicenciana. XXXII Semana de Estudios Vicencianos*, CEME, Salamanca 2007, p. 19.

because of their repercussions become particular ones. For example, in the life of St. Louise, I proposed the hypothesis that Louis de Marillac was not her father, and that St. Louise was the daughter of unknown parents, although one of them was a Marillac.²² It was a singular hypothesis that turned into a particular one for the repercussion it had in her life as a young girl, a married woman, a widow and in her relationship with her son Michel, as well as explaining her meeting with St. Vincent, the foundation of the Daughters of Charity and an infinite number of relationships and consequences as Superior General of the Company. But it was also applicable to many women, even of the nobility, whose parents did not recognize them, even as illegitimate children.

“It is the researcher’s task to provide himself with the necessary information to question or to prove his hypothesis; and since he has not lived what he is studying and he can be influenced by the facts he investigates, frequently he must depend on deduction and logical analysis, using the experience recorded by others more than direct observation. To make sure this information is as true as possible, he should base himself on ‘first hand’ data.”²³

Constructing the model

There is another method similar to the hypothesis which greatly facilitates the development of the theme; it is the method called “constructing the model” and it is used when what is selected as a theme is a structure, a system or a spirituality, for example of the Congregation, of the Company or any branch of the Vincentian Family. Once again a few examples will explain it better than my exposition. We know that in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century the religious state was admired in an exaggerated way; and because of that, the Congregation took on many similarities with the religious state not only in its life, but also in its structures. This method consists in imagining what would have happened if the Congregation had remained firm in its life, in the primitive structures and in its secular nature. To answer that question and to study the theme, a model is constructed and the results are compared until one can draw conclusions that are valid for the present time and can be

²² BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., *Empeñada en un paraíso para los pobres*, CEME, Salamanca 1995, pgs. 11-17.

²³ See TEVNI GRAJALES GUERRA, *Conceptos Básicos para la Investigación Social* (Publicaciones Universidad de Montemorelos) Nuevo León, México 1996. Cp. 5^o: Las hipótesis de la investigación.

projected towards the future.²⁴ The same method is applicable when one wishes to study the theme of the marginalized in the 17th century or in other eras:²⁵ the country people, women, slaves, Jews, outlaws, vagabonds, etc. The model of what should have been and what in fact was can help to get a better idea of the society of that time.

The Comparison

The fact that Thematic History deals with matters that have occurred in time, in a place and to some groups of people provokes, without doubt, comparisons. That is to say, comparing among themselves the happenings of different countries and institutions or of different ages. A Vincentian researcher can choose as a theme concrete events of the history of the Congregation, of the Daughters of Charity, or themes related to the ministry in seminaries or among the poor; and then he has to analyze these same themes in light of the politics and economy, or examine similar facts and phenomena that occurred in other times and places. And he feels the need, in order to clarify, enrich, complete and better understand the theme, to make comparisons with other figures of the time or with the activities of other congregations, and even with the activities and dealings of governments or individuals who have another religion or none at all. How much light could be shed for us by comparing the development of the missions given by Vincent and his missionaries — or in other times — with the development of those given by the Oratorians, the Jesuits, the Capuchins. Was there similarity or difference in the thrust given to seminary work by the Vincentians and the Oratorians?²⁶

This aspect of Thematic History is called today Comparative History. It is a kind of history that seeks to elucidate and better understand a theme by comparing among themselves facts and witnesses who belong to languages and cultures that are different or similar.

²⁴ ALICIA ALTED VIGIL - JUAN A. SÁNCHEZ BELÉN, *Métodos y formas de investigación en historia moderna y contemporánea*, Editorial Universitaria Ramón Areces, Madrid 2005, pgs. 14-16.

²⁵ BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., "Los excluidos en tiempos de san Vicente," in *La exclusión social*. XXII Semana de Estudios Vicencianos, CEME, Salamanca 2004, p. 17 ss.

²⁶ This is what F. LEBRUN does, "La pastorale de les conversions intérieures: l'exemple des lazaristes en Haute-Bretagne au XVII^e siècle," en *La conversion au XVII^e siècle. Actes du XII^e Colloque de Marseille (janvier 1982)*, C.M.R. no. 17, 1983, p. 250.

However, one must be very careful, when comparing situations and people of different times, always to analyze and understand the differences in meaning in the statistics, in the words and in the social strata and ways of life that changing times always produce. The historian Roger Chartier says that “*there is always a great danger when historians try to interpret the present on the basis of comparisons with the past. Every historical configuration has specific characteristics which prevent an immediate analogy with contemporary times.*”²⁷ And Julio Arostegui warns of the risks of falling into anachronisms when comparing societies, institutions, events or persons separated in space and time, but he affirms that “in present day Historiography the advantages are greater than the risks, and they present a great advance inasmuch as, despite the dangers, comparative history is the best way to understand the processes of “globalization” and other characteristics of contemporary societies.”²⁸

The anachronism has come to us, when analyzing the priestly vocation of the young Vincent and the family ambition to improve its social standing, of considering him as a young priest with no interest in the care of souls who only looked for money in order to live comfortably in his native town, or with no interest in holiness in his early years. We have invented for ourselves a conversion that is a complete break with his former life. The anachronism consists in focusing on his priestly vocation, the care of souls and holiness with the mentality of today, or with the one the saint had after the reform of the priesthood in France.²⁹ Only if one takes into account the differences in mentality in different times and places can one draw general conclusions that are valid for the present.

In order for Thematic History to be able to compare between historical persons and events, I repeat, it should do so within General History, seeing it as a whole which, when comparing themes about different times, places or institutions, will instill in us an experience about what was and is our history. Other examples: we understand much better the secularity of the Congregation if we compare it with the diocesan priests, the Oratorians, the Jesuits or other religious. To understand the Daughters of Charity it is more necessary to

²⁷ CIENCIA HOY, *Revista de Divulgación científica y Tecnológica de...*, Interview with Roger Chartier, vol. VI, no. 31 (Sep.-Oct. 1995).

²⁸ JULIO AROSTEGUI, *La investigación histórica: teoría y método*, Editorial Crítica, Plaza edición, Barcelona 1995, pgs. 310-313.

²⁹ I think I cleared up this anachronism in the conference I gave in Salamanca in August 2006, BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., “La santidad en san Vicente de Paúl,” in *Urgencias pastorales de la Familia Vicenciana*, CEME, Salamanca 2007, pgs. 15-54.

compare them with the secular confraternities and with the religious, especially the Salesians, the Ursulines and the daughters of Maria Ward.³⁰ Vincent himself, when he wants to clarify what is and how is the Vincentian spirit, compares it with the Carthusians, Jesuits and Capuchins. In the same way a comparison helps us know how were and are our charism, our vows, our evangelization of the poor, etc., in the past and in the present in relation to the constant and unstoppable changes of the times. Investigation and study of themes will lead us to an evolution and a creativity that facilitate our mission in modern society without breaking with the essence of our origins, our past, the tradition and the charism. For example, the primitive Rules that St. Vincent gave us placed as the second end “to evangelize the poor, especially of the country,” and the Constitutions of 1983 have changed it to “evangelize the poor, above all the most abandoned.”³¹ Is that valid for today? Will it be for the future?

There are some pressing questions. Will young Vincentian historical researchers understand the similarities and differences between times, countries, regions, the diverse institutions of the church in order to know how to give appropriate answers to the profound problems of today's poor and to the problems of the Congregation which worry us today? In thematic analyses and as they formulate comparisons, will they know how to relate them with the contexts in which they originated, in which they developed and in which we live today?

Summarizing what has been said up to now I would say that, as we study a theme of Vincentian history, historical comparison sets out events and phenomena of one place and time and presents them with the intention of reconstructing a past reality from present day perspectives which, in their turn, are related with expectations about the future, but without falling into the temptation of doing systematic history, that is, of producing a rational system in the present and applying it indiscriminately to societies of the past, whether that is valid or not. This is forcing history; this is anachronism. What I am trying to say is that comparison in Thematic History distinguishes itself because it analyzes in context the themes which have been the object of study taking into account, on the one hand, the processes of change, and on the other, the relationships and influences there may have been among the different religious insti-

³⁰ BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., *Empeñada en un paraíso para los pobres*, CEME, Salamanca 1995, p. 83 s.

³¹ Cf. BENITO MARTÍNEZ BETANZOS, C.M., “Motivaciones sociales en la fundación de la Congregación de la Misión,” in *Vicente de Paúl, pervivencia de un fundador*, CEME, Salamanca 1972, pgs. 17-30.

tutions, their charisms and ministries, as well as among the different social strata, cultures, civilizations, regions and even countries.

There are occasions in which comparative history is what stabilizes and gives unity to a chosen theme; and without the comparisons, there would be no concrete theme to study. For example, the French historian Bartolome Bennassar just published a book about 120 queens and princesses in the European courts from the end of the 15th century until the 18th century.³² The hypothesis was the idea that the power sought by the kings led them to marry off the princesses in their adolescent years in order to form alliances or obtain advantages. And what the princes sought in these marriages was to have heirs to carry on the monarchy. But this objective led to the result that more than half of the 120 princesses died before they were 30 years old, many of them worn out by so much child bearing. Another conclusion was that the majority lived unlucky in love and in their social life; and that, since they had no power, they are not remembered except the ones who were left widows and became regents, like Maria de Medici and Anne of Austria. It is easy to see that without comparative history this theme could not have been developed.

History as Science and Comparison

According to Kocka, comparative history can put more emphasis either on the contrast, on “understanding the differences and knowing more exactly the individual cases included in the comparison,” or on the generalization, on “studying the coincidences and, therefore understanding and systematizing the general relationships,”³³ because for many historians history is science only if it can draw out general conclusions. Or as Arostegui states, only by comparing epochs and societies will our researches not be disembodied and distant from life, for then phenomena and events which of themselves are *singular*, will always be able to have a *general* application which is useful in the present and opens pathways of hope for the future. That is, by applying the comparison in Thematic History to the present, one can respond to the most flagrant contradiction of history: that we study human, concrete, individual fact in their singularity in order to find general and universal

³² BARTOLOMÉ BENASSAR, *Reinas y princesas del Renacimiento a la Ilustración: el lecho, el poder y la muerte*, Paidós, Barcelona 2007.

³³ JÜRGEN KOCKA, *Historia social y conciencia histórica*, Marcial Pons, Madrid 2002, pgs. 43-63.

formulas that are useful in the present and the future, for only in that way would history be a science.

It is the famous debate between the singular and the universal in the sciences. In this debate Le Goff³⁴ emphasizes the importance of comparative method in history: "The scientific character of history resides as much in the valuing of differences as in the valuing of similarities," and he points out that monographic studies, singular and limited in space and time, are valid if they set forth a general and universal problem. In this case, the comparison helps to construct the present and plan for the future, at the same time that we learn to reflect on what historical research is and what it entails.

Not only for Le Goff but for other historians as well, the contradiction between the singular and the universal in history is resolved by means of the comparison; and they say that history can be science, but in the realm of the *social sciences* as far as they are *purely empirical*, outside the realm of the ethics and morality of *human acts* and of *freedom*. And they affirm that the comparison is the means by which historical phenomena are empirically demonstrated.

Other authors (for example, Lucien Febvre and his present day heirs of the *Nouvelle Histoire* school) have believed that history, despite that contradiction, can be considered a science, not without ambiguity, according to the *post-modern* idea of science, seen as a group of problems and hypotheses, that the comparison resolves in an empirical way.

The Spanish historian Luis Suarez-Fernandez has proposed that on the basis of certain elements, history could be considered as scientific knowledge: *historical knowledge "is scientific for it is aimed at discovering that which was previously unknown to it: the testimonies it uses are frequently written documents, but many others of very different kinds are also useful like... cultural traces in their almost unlimited variety. All the questions are formulated in the present time, to which the answers must adapt themselves."*³⁵ There is no doubt that the comparative method of Thematic History responds better to the questions the choice of the theme has provoked.

Thus Henri Marrou has seen the possibility of justifying history as a science, not in a proper sense, but inasmuch as it employs *scientific methodology*, for the historian *approaches* his formal object, not in a *common* or *ordinary* way, but rather in a rigorous and "technical" way, such as the comparison.

³⁴ JACQUES LE GOFF, *Pensar la historia. Modernidad, presente, progreso*, Paidós, Barcelona 1991, p. 46.

³⁵ *Corrientes del pensamiento histórico*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1996, p. 19.

The Selection of Themes and Comparisons

The focuses we may give to themes should be well thought out in order to facilitate a better understanding of the processes as much of change as of continuity in the time of the Vincentian spirit, life, charism and mission, for they establish for us Vincentians the evolution of determined matters from the 17th century, at least, to the present time and what can be projected of the future. Likewise, it is better that the comparisons we may make try to identify the common characteristics or the contrasts there may have been by means of the study of themes and facilitate some simple references that help us resolve the difficulties inherent in the focus we give to the themes.

One of the biggest problems in Thematic History is the selection of themes. There is no common criteria for the different proposals. What does not seem to be a good idea is choosing a theme because of the urge to shine. Although there may be themes from our history that seem to be itching for erudition, they are not. They are themes which can spring up as answers to some questions which concern us to understand better the nature of our own history. For example, how much did the fact that it was a Parisian Company and not a provincial one influence the approbation and expansion of the Daughters of Charity? The fact that it was connected to the nobility and the court through its founder and the Ladies of Charity? Because St. Vincent was a national figure, did his death have repercussions for the stability of the Congregation, leaving a void that was difficult to fill until the arrival of Fr. Etienne? How did St. Lazare with its lands and goods affect the structures of the Congregation either during the life of St. Vincent or after his death?

I think the criterion which should always determine the selection of a theme is *its necessity, its relevance and its impact* for the present. (Although others have already spoken about this area, I would like to touch on it as well for the sake of completing the conference.) The *need* responds to the age old principle that *the needs of the present show us what past we want to investigate* to understand and find avenues of solution to present day problems or so that the chosen theme become a model that lights up the way, without translating it into a slogan to defend an ideology or a position. *Relevance*, not fashion, either because it is an appropriate theme for participating in an Assembly or to recognize a scientific value or some aspect of our nature, spirit or charism. Finally, its *impact* on some problem which concerns us, such as the popular missions, the Vincentian family or the collaboration with the laity on today's social problems. However, for those of us gathered here I would add one more criterion — *viability* — finding out whether the documents I need to find, the

counties and places I need to go to and the language I need to know are in consonance with the economic means at my disposal, with the permissions I need to obtain, with the time I have and with the capacity for understanding the language of the documents and of the bibliography I need.

To say it in another way: that the theme should respond to a theoretical or practical problem we need to solve, for example vocation work; that the scientific study could contribute new lights to the solution of the problem that could exist in other times and places; and that there be possibilities and material means to be investigated. That is, one must respond to three well known questions: what does one want to investigate? What for? What means does one have at hand? For this reason, I repeat, it is a good idea to limit the theme with regard to time and space or place, besides finding out all that has been written about the theme, in how much depth has it been studied and what answers have other researcher given. Only after all these steps can we formulate the hypotheses from which we will begin to study the chosen theme.

The same difficulty is found in choosing the contents and terms which we want to compare, because when comparing some aspects of a theme among themselves and not others, one can change the focus we should always give to our investigation and end up with a static study of facts and contrasts more than with an emphasis on evolution and progress. Or said another way, if the interest in the theme to be studied depends on the importance of the applications we want to draw out for the present and the future, the importance of the comparisons which we make will depend on the question we formulate for ourselves in accordance with the objectives we look for in the study of the theme. For this reason it is worthwhile to bear in mind the interests and problems not just of the Vincentians, but also of the people among whom we live.

For all these reasons, the selection of themes and comparisons is one of the most important and difficult steps in Thematic History, because this conditions the results and demands very basic theoretical and practical reflections ahead of time. For this very reason, I would like to recommend what Pierre Vilar advised: it is a good idea to choose a very concrete theme, with a well defined and homogeneous geographic space; to have a workable time frame, from such a year to such a year; and to establish a clear and solid institutional framework.³⁶

³⁶ PIERRE VILAR, *Crecimiento y desarrollo*, Ariel, Barcelona 1976, pgs. 36-37.

Allow me now to set out a series of comparisons to try to be clearer: our own spirituality compared with other spiritualities; evangelization in general or of the poor compared with that of other congregations, with ecclesial, secular or lay evangelization; the personality and influence of the founders and the Superiors General or Visitors compared with those of different times or with different social, national or regional situations; creativity and influence of earlier local, provincial and General assemblies compared with the creativity and influence which our latest Assemblies have had or the Assemblies of other congregations; compare the cultures and religious world in which our predecessors evangelized with those in which we evangelize.

The Human Person an Interrelated Actor of History

Do not forget, however, that Thematic History compares structures and processes, but also experiences and guidelines of action for men, because, briefly, the actors of history are men with their personal psychology and circumstances. As a rule we like to deal with structural themes, institutional or theoretical, with secularity, the charism, the spirit, our vows or the community in theory. But I repeat what I said in the previous conference: *what really interest us are people — what we lived and how we lived it.*

What has made our history, what has been written down in the documents are the interrelationships of the missionaries. It is not the same studying the *history of climate in France* as studying the *history of the French people in dependence on climate change*. And applying these ideas to Vincentian studies leads us to take into account in certain themes and comparisons the Vincentian confreres who lived, for example, the influences of religious life on our customs during the 19th and 20th centuries because of the exaltation of religious life at that time, or when we protested that our vows are not religious; and the poor people who suffered or who suffer when we compare the levels of poverty of the country people and the vagabonds of the 17th century with those of today. Today we have the advantage that the encounter between the social sciences and the humanities has smoothed the way and shed light on the selection of themes about the history of the poor.

There is a note that we Vincentians have to take into account when we judge the morality of institutional facts, because the more individual and concrete the theme the greater the moral weight it entails, and with a morality that can be anachronistic. It is true that the historian, especially if he is a believer, cannot avoid making

moral judgments about institutional and social situations that arise in the chosen themes, for example, slavery, the regimen of Richelieu, the galleys, certain laws, etc. But, in all of this, there is a danger that some Vincentians, generally clear thinkers, make so many moral judgments they seem more moralists than historians.³⁷

I have spent time on the idea of the comparison in Thematic History because, for many people and especially for Vincentians, the historian's task consists in establishing the facts and interpreting them with the perspective not only of past time, but also the present and the future. Comparing our facts with those of other times and places helps us to do that. And he cannot forget that the researcher must use objectively two resources: first objective judgment, so as to better analyze, compare and evaluate, and so be able to give a plausible interpretation, repositioning in real time the theme of his research; and secondly, what lesson does he intend to draw for the present and the future. For one must bear in mind that, like true history, Thematic History should try to make sense of the present, making an effort to set up a dialogue with the past that can be useful to prepare for the future that is coming for Vincentian institutions and their members.

The Psychology of the Researcher

It is true that a good historian, who does not wish to remain in the simple role of an erudite man, should have a mature vision with regard to the social and cultural reality of the time in which he lives and be inculcated in it so as to be able to choose some themes that respond to present day problems. For that same reason, the Vincentian researcher must love his vocation, the Congregation, his ministry; he should have no peace before the problems which concern us and feel a concern to solve them in the present and open new and prophetic roads into the future. Otherwise his studies will be purely erudite studies whose content interests no one and contributes nothing to the Vincentian Family for its life and ministry in today's society.

But it is also true, as other speakers have already said, that the researcher is obliged to be honest and have common sense so as not to add or subtract anything from the truth he discovers in the documents for he should be critically, scientifically and humanly objective: critically, so as not to falsify the sense of the documen-

³⁷ EDWARD H. CARR, *¿Qué es la historia?*, Ariel, Barcelona 2003, pgs. 153-165.

tation; scientifically, to use scientific method; and humanly because his objectivity is not that of a naturalist, a physicist or biologist, but rather that of human researcher who interprets documents which portray human acts and the life of other people who act freely. And like it or not, it is impossible for him to disconnect himself from his mentality and his feelings when he chooses and ponders themes, and from his psychology when he interprets them. Like every other man, the historian cannot detach himself from the circumstances that formed his personality, as Ortega y Gasset has said.³⁸ The researcher is the son of a concrete time and place, and he questions the past in light of his present day concerns. The good historian should surely make use of his understanding, but also of his feelings — he is not a naturalist. And he needs to connect to the human experiences contained in the documents. He should use as well his imagination and even his fantasy to recreate the past in his mind. The research will be more intense and the exposition more agreeable.

The classical ideal of objectivity is unattainable. Honesty does not mean speaking impartially nor painting everything the same pleasant gray, but rather with all the colors, even if it means adding a little black. Even more, it is necessary for him to connect with the human experiences which are transmitted by means of the documents and other testimonies. With those human experiences he wants to measure and catalogue an age in order to be able to contribute some relative values for our time and the future. And that does not mean that we already bring — before studying the documents — preconceived ideas and definite conclusions, and that we want to demonstrate them by way of past history, trying to project the present into the past. But he does need to construct some reasonable and well founded hypotheses that open up the present and facilitate access to the future. The historian cannot deny that one thing is the history lived by some men, the product of a certain situation, and another is the history he *constructs* and writes about interpreting those lived facts from another time. For if he is not impartial when he chooses the themes according to his inclinations, likes and intentions, neither will he be impartial in selecting and interpreting the documents. Perhaps the objectivity necessary for an historian may be, as you heard when speaking of historical methodology, being honest in the methods he employs.

That means he has to know how to distinguish between the freedom of persons and determinism, individual events and those of

³⁸ JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET, *Meditaciones del Quijote. Obras completas*, t. I, Revista de Occidente, Madrid 1957, p. 322.

society; he must know how to distinguish when some happenings are the result of chance and when some events are the cause of others. The historian is not an analyst who points out that one thing follows upon another, but rather a scientist who suggests how one event leads to others. But, above all, he must know how to distinguish the objectivity of past happenings and the subjectivity of the historian's interpretation. This means that, although it may be impossible for him to find absolute objectivity, he should try to approximate it as closely as possible within the human fallibility implied by unforeseen circumstances of time and place.

It is an objective difficult to achieve especially in these last years when post-modernism has produced a series of relativist historians, proclaiming that historical events are relative and, as a result, we cannot know the past with any surety since the interpretation the historian gives to the documents is subjective. Now one will not insist upon the fact that in all historiographic discourse we find the presence of an *interrpretation* by the historian, but rather one will insist upon the fact that *history* is a *pure and simple interpretation or construction of the historian*. For this reason, it cannot be surprising that some historians have gone so far as to uphold that the problem of *objectivity* and *truth* in history today has been overcome. History is knowledge of the human past. From here can be understood the premises, now classical, that history is *inseparable from the historian* and that *history is made with documents* (AHUMADA DURÁN).

When the historian investigates a particular theme from a determined place, from a concrete time period or about real people, he must at least flee from the anachronism of tacitly equating the experiences of that time with modern ones, from which they are separated by an unbridgeable abyss such as time and social, familial and even personal circumstances: for example, the experiences which St. Vincent, St. Louise and the first missionaries felt in the face of those displaced by war (the migrations of that time), or what the Vicars General, Fr. Slattery and the missionaries felt in the face of the migrations during and after World War II, with what we feel today especially in France, Spain and Italy in the face of the boats full of immigrants who arrive at our shores. And even though the researcher, when he studies the phenomena that marked an age, cannot fail to evaluate and interpret them according to his own psychology, he should always bear in mind the changes which occur in time, whether long or short, sometimes suddenly and other times slowly, but continually.

The Context; the social guards

One of the accusations that has been made against the analytical school is that it ignores what could be called the contextual dimension in history, the articulation between scientific, religious and philosophical thought, between knowledge and statement, between cultural, mental habits and the customs we discover have left impressions in the documents. This is what we call context and it has an essential importance in Thematic History, even though context has different dimensions or points of view according to the interpretation which the historian may make, according to the historical school he follows or the historical system he applies. Is the context for him an immovable social structure which he finds already established or a social and historical framework that is variable and not necessary except according to the psychology of the historian? Does the historian accept the structures which connect and can direct events or does he place anonymous subjects in the concrete role which they play within the context to which they belong in tension with his own interests? In the words of Ricoeur: *does the historian relate things just as they are or does he relate things as they happen to us?*

When we choose a theme to study, we have said it is necessary to begin by inserting it in a time and place, thus letting it be enclosed within a set of social circumstances which we call social context. Well, in relation with the social context, we have to bear in mind what some historians today call the *social guardians*, which “would be precisely those collective symbols which govern the systems of social identification and integration, and which make visible the social invisibility.” Thus the social order established in Europe from the time of St. Vincent to the French Revolution has a social mentality called the Ancien Regime; the one that marked the social life of the 19th century is known as the Illustration; while the period from World War II until 1980 produced a series a social guardians which allowed the pacific domination of two different systems of social order: the countries of capitalistic democracy and the countries of the so called “real socialism” or “state capitalism” or “communism.” In our day one social guardian which takes in and constructs modern society is “democracy.” But, *how have the social guardians that have permitted the permanence of the reigning social order in Europe for the last fifty years been constructed?*

Durkheim affirmed at the beginning of *The Rules of Modern Sociology*: “There are some ways of acting, thinking and feeling that present the notable property of existing outside of individual

consciences. These types of conduct or of thought are not only external to the individual, but they are also endowed with an imperative and coercive power in virtue of which they impose themselves on (the individual conscience), whether it wants it to or not.... There are cases in which the coercive character is not easily recognizable... what is special about social coercion is that it is owed not to the rigidity of some molecular arrangements, but to *the prestige with which certain symbols are endowed.*"

Parsons would reduce the sense of "the collective" to a "possession in common", and set forth the problem, supposedly metaphysical, of the separation between "social reality" and "symbols or manifestations."³⁹

Auxiliary Sciences

Although those of us who are here trying to animate one another to study Vincentian themes are Vincentians, we know that our field is religious, spiritual and social in all the aspects that have to do with the poor, from the economic to the educational. This means that the themes to be studied can be innumerable. Given, then, the enormous accumulation of sources, it is necessary first of all to establish which of them are indispensable for the work later on; this is the terrain of the so called "auxiliary sciences" of history which not only provide us with information, but at the same time become personal tools for the researcher: historical geography, philology, paleology, epigraphy, chronology, etc.

If an historian wants to investigate any aspect of St. Vincent or Vincentiana, he has to have some sufficient knowledge of General History, as well as of the language, the customs, the passions and life of the age and the places that took in Vincent de Paul and the Congregation of the Mission. I remind you that, although today many good books are translated into all languages,, nevertheless we will often need to know the language of the documents related to the theme to be treated; or better yet, the language of the age of the theme to be treated. For example, if today we wished to deal with the theme of immigrants and draw some hints from the behavior of the Vincentian Family during the Fronde or the 30 Years War, we would find that *lordly regime* is not the same as the *feudal regime*, that the *orders* are not strictly *social classes*, that government is not admini-

³⁹ JUAN LUÍS PINTOS, *Los imaginarios sociales. (La nueva construcción de la realidad social)*, 1994. Web page of the Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

stration, and that in the latter the bourgeois officials supplanted the nobles, and the commissars the officials. It is necessary to know that Parliament is made up of the First Estate (the clergy), the Second Estate (the nobility) and the Third Estate (the people). But in reality the First Estate was made up of bishops and abbots, and that simple priests did not belong to that clergy; and the Third Estate was formed almost totally by the middle class, and for that reason the (common) people did not form part of Parliament, becoming the class of the excluded. In the relationships St. Vincent had with wealthy people one must bear in mind that *nobleman* does not mean noble, but honored; that every gentleman is noble, but not every noble is a gentleman. The gentleman is only the noble of the sword and not of the toga.

Presupposing, then, all this information, the first thing the researcher should do is situate the historical figure or the theme and enter into heuristics, that is, in the search for documents or studies that help him in his investigation, and to verify the objective truth of all of them, for the sources are the protagonists. I will not dwell on this because in the conference on methodology you were told of all the work the researcher has to do before proceeding to create his work, of the search in general for his material and the verification of them, for the sources are the protagonists. Nor will I say anything of the internal and external critique of the documents, because you have already heard that. I just remind you that here too comparative history comes into play.

But I do want to remind you that the professionalization of historical studies in the second half of the 19th century led to the consolidation of some auxiliary disciplines that should help the historian to determine the authenticity and veracity of the written document preserved in the public archive. The vertiginous acceleration of events throughout the 20th century, the globalization of phenomena, their immediacy and presence anywhere on the planet thanks to ever more powerful means of communication, the rapid scientific and technological advances...; all this means that the social scientist and consequently the historian have to face a huge amount of new and varied information which obliges them to continually revise the theoretical and methodological proposals of their disciplines. This problem affects not only the historian of the present, but also the one who studies bygone eras has to rework his epistemological and methodological work plans, because the technological advances have changed the ways of accessing information in a way unthinkable a few decades ago.

On the other hand, the sources the historian works with are subject to technological changes which lead continually to a

redefinition of the bases upon which the auxiliary disciplines have traditionally been established. To this must be added the interdisciplinary character of history (not just the history of the present) with other social sciences and the employment of the methods and techniques of the latter. This should not be seen as a limitation for history, but rather as a source of enrichment. Furthermore, the historian can count on three methodological elements which allow him to go farther than any other social scientist: temporality, globality, and the capacity for synthesis.

With regard to temporality, history is not a science of the past, but rather of “societies in time.” This means that it does not exclude from its object of study any chronological period, and it makes possible a vision of the temporal as a continuum, backward and forward from the present. Secondly, “the historian,” as opposed to other social scientists, needs to combine all the elements which contribute to a process, in order to see how they interrelate with and influence each other. This overall perception of historical phenomena permits, finally, developing the capacity for synthesis necessary to be able to make sense of and interpret the whole group of factors which are found at the center of every historical phenomenon.⁴⁰

Translation: JOSEPH V. CUMMINS, C.M.

⁴⁰ ALICIA ALTED VIGIL - JUAN A. SÁNCHEZ BELÉN, *o.c.*, pgs. 139-140.

Vincentian Studies in Latin America

by John P. Prager, C.M.

1. Introduction

This presentation is an attempt to give a simple overview of the state of Vincentian Studies in present day Latin America. I want to begin by offering two quick thoughts on the terms in the title of this conference.

I understand Vincentian Studies as an attempt to reflect on how the Vincentian charism has taken shape in different historical moments and in specific cultural situations. In other words, it is the study of fidelity (and sometimes lack of fidelity) to the charism. From this perspective, the Vincentian charism becomes the criteria for evaluating our history, spirituality, etc. Otherwise, Vincentian Studies becomes a series of unconnected anecdotes or a history of institutions. If we can evaluate how the charism was incarnated in the past, we can learn something valuable for the present.

For sake of convenience we speak about the southern hemisphere of the Americas as Latin America. There are some common characteristics shared throughout the region, but many more differences. In reality, there are more than twenty countries, each with its own history, often with a past relationship with a European colonial power. Each of the nations contains several languages and cultures — mestizo, indigenous, Afro-American — which marks the uniqueness of the country.

Let me point out some of the general tendencies in Vincentian Studies in Latin America:

2. From the perspective of the home country

Most of the Latin American Provinces began as missions from Europe. In the second half of the Nineteenth Century and beginning of the Twentieth, the Congregation responded to the urgent needs of the Latin American Church. For a long time a good percentage of the personnel came from outside the continent.

A number of studies have been done by the Provinces which sent missionaries to Latin America (see for example the recent history of

the Barcelona Province or the History of the CM in the United States). Latin America has been included as part of these studies. These point out the sacrifices in money and manpower that these Provinces embraced for the good of the Church and the service of the poor.

Of course, the obvious drawback to approaching the history this way is that it reflects the history from a place outside of the continent. Sometimes local concerns, issues and sensitivities are missed.

3. From the perspective of Latin America

Another approach has been to view the Congregation as part of the Latin American Church. These studies have tried to reflect on the Vincentian insertion in the local history. The Vincentian presence can be viewed as a response to Latin American needs and sensitivities.

For a number of years, Enrique Dussel directed a project for a history of the Church in Latin America under the auspices of CEHILA (see www.cehila.org). The historians who worked on the multivolume study divided up the history in this way:

a) *The colonial period (1492-1820)*

b) *Independence (1820-1860)*

This was separation from European colonial powers, not revolution. Life changed very little for the common people. One elite was substituted for another.

For the Church it meant a significant loss of resources, both economic and human. Huge numbers of clergy returned to Europe. The Holy See refused to name bishops in some countries for decades rather than risk problems with the ex-colonial powers.

The Congregation began to arrive at this time to respond to the huge pastoral vacuum. The two traditional works of the CM (seminaries and missions) were exactly what were needed.

c) *Liberal Governments (1870-1900)*

In the last decades of the Nineteenth Century liberal movements inspired by philosophical currents from Europe came to power. Frequently, the Church was at odds with the new governments. In some places there were persecutions, exile for the clergy and loss of property.

d) *Conservative Governments(1920-1960)*

At the beginning of the Twentieth Century conservatives came to power, in many countries with the aid of the Church. The hierarchy welcomed the chance to develop pastoral activity in relative freedom after decades of government opposition. The trade-off for permission to open schools and churches was silence in the face of growing injustice.

4. Since Medellin (1968-)

The years since Vatican II and Medellin have been marked by tremendous changes in the Latin American Church. There has been a rethinking of the old alliances with the conservative elites. The Church has made the option for the poor one of the central focuses of its pastoral activity.

One way to do Vincentian Studies from a Latin American perspective is to see how the Congregation has lived its charism in each of the time frames. What works were accepted and why? Where did we send our members to work? How did we work?

5. Professional-Academic Studies

In most parts of the world Vincentian experts have come from the ranks of the seminary or university professors. Most were not trained specifically for Vincentian Studies. They took their studies of history, theology or canon law and applied them to Vincentian themes.

The area of professional studies has probably been the weakest element of Vincentian Studies in Latin America. Those countries which have produced academic histories (Colombia, Mexico, Brazil) have also been the countries which have had to prepare men for work in seminaries.

6. A Pastoral Emphasis

The strength of Latin America in the field of Vincentian Studies has been its pastoral emphasis.

Most of the Provinces are missionary, called to abandoned areas, with few priests and grinding poverty. The currents prevalent in the Latin American Church since Medellin and Puebla (option for poor, liberation theology, new evangelization) have produced Vincentian reflections with a pastoral direction. The studies that have been done all exhibit that pastoral sense (Ubillus, Tamayo, Valenga, etc.).

Credit should be given here to the role of CLAPVI (Conference of Latin American Vincentian Provinces). For thirty-five years CLAPVI

has provided a space for the interchange of ideas and reflections for the confreres, Daughters of Charity and laity. It has done this in several ways:

- CLAPVI Bulletin which is published several times each year with Vincentian topics.
- The CLAPVI Meetings usually held twice a year (once in the northern zone and once in the south). In recent years the meetings have discussed such topics as: popular missions, parishes, seminary formation, the Ratio Missionum, etc.
- The School of Vincentian Spirituality which is now conducted every two years.

7. Conclusion

A lot has been done over the past quarter century in the area of Vincentian Studies in Latin America. Of, course much still remains to do. In conclusion I want to point out three areas that need attention for the future:

a) *More investigation*

Some province have yet to write their histories. Biographies of confreres who have lived the Vincentian charism in the continent have not been researched or published.

b) *Better preparation*

Not all Vincentian Studies need to be done by professors or in an academic setting. Nonetheless, academic preparation for some confreres would add a dimension to the studies and reflections being done in this continent.

c) *More dialogue with Vincentian Studies from other areas of the world*

I am frequently amazed at how little confreres know about Vincentian Studies in Latin America. Outside of this continent, how many Vincentian libraries receive the CLAPVI Bulletin? The consequence is that a rich vein of Vincentian reflection is rarely taken into account.

Of course, dialogue is a two-way street. How many Latin American confreres pay attention to Vincentian Studies done in other parts of the world?

One area that needs attention, something that SIEV and CIF might promote, is more dialogue from around the world on Vincentian topics.

Italian Vincentian Historiography

by Luigi Mezzadri, C.M.

Before grappling with the theme and inserting it into the overall picture¹ of historiography, it is necessary to preface it with some observations on the political use of historiography and the role of the Italians within the Congregation of the Mission.

Political use of historiography

When René Alméras was launching the biography by **Abelly (1664)** he asserted that three books would be sufficient for a confrere, The Bible, the Common Rules and the biography of the founder. The Sacred Scriptures are the common rule for all Christians, the second book is the special rule for confreres, and the

¹ C.-J. LACOUR, *Histoire générale de la Congrégation de la Mission commençant depuis la mort du B. Vincent de Paul et finissant vers l'année 1720...*, ms. in the archives of the General Curia in Rome. The printed edition of this is *Histoire générale de la Congrégation de la Mission*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 62 (1897) 137-138, 296-329; 63 (1898) 131-161, 312-329, 620-635; 64 (1899) 156-176, 411-430, 509-535; 65 (1900) 290-306, 424-442; 66 (1901) 436-448, 570-580; 67 (1902) 148-154, 269-303, 572-604; A. ALLOU, *Précis de l'histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission depuis la fondation en 1625 jusqu'à la mort de M. Etienne en 1874*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 89 (1924) 575-1026; 90 (1925) 5-223; P. COSTE, *La Congrégation de la Mission dite de Saint-Lazare*, Paris 1927; E. ROBERT, *Histoire de la Congrégation de la Mission*, in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 95 (1930) 686-696; 96 (1931) 24-32, 294-319, 457-475, 700-713; 97 (1932) 7-15, 221-234, 417-434, 661-676; 98 (1933) 51-64, 224-241, 441-461, 679-703; 99 (1934) 13-30, 229-241, 437-454, 680-700; 100 (1935) 37-55, 229-248, 523-548, 758-780; 101 (1936) 5-30, 201-223, 481-508, 773-776; 102 (1937) 5-26, 277-310, 543-569, 785-825; 103 (1938) 3-58, 169-220, 417-460, 641-683; 104 (1939) 3-53, 257-319, 645-676; 105 (1940) 39-72; 106-107 (1941-1942) 88-123; 108-109 (1943-1944) 64-91; 110-112 (1945-1947) 147-166, 366-399; G. GOYAU, *La Congrégation de la Mission des Lazaristes*, Paris 1938; J. HERRERA, *Historia de la Congregación de la Misión*, Madrid 1949; R.S. POOLE, *A History of the Congregation of the Mission, 1625-1843*, n.p. 1973; L. MEZZADRI - J.M. ROMÁN, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione, I Dalla fondazione alla fine del XVII secolo (1625-1697)*, Roma 1992; L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione, II La Congregazione della Missione nel sec. XVIII: Francia, Italia e Missioni (1697-1788)*, Roma 2000.

third is a more restricted and admirable paraphrase of the other two.² The idea, therefore, was to pass on to posterity a vision of the founder, ignoring the possibility of future interpretations emerging, as happened in the case of the Franciscans.

Is this a baseless suspicion? Underlying this, at that time, was the question of Gallicanism, the relationship between a religious congregation and the Head of State (in this case Louis XIV of France and the Holy See). At issue, therefore, was an ecclesiological question: on whom does a congregation depend, to whom does it report? The Pope or the Sovereign?

This whole thing came to a head with the death of Edme Jolly (1697), when King Louis XIV invoked his veto to block the election of Maurice Faure, who was a Savoyard; he required a Frenchman to be elected. The Instruction to the Prince of Monaco, dated 28 January 1699, when he was entrusted with a mission to Rome, looked on the Congregation of the Mission as a French institution which had some houses outside France, though this was regarded as an exception. The bottom line of the Gallican customs was that the king could not tolerate the election of a foreigner as head of such an institution, one which, moreover, had charge of some parishes and chapels built in places where the Court used to reside.³

² L. ABELLY, *La vie du vénérable serviteur de Dieu Vincent de Paul, instituteur et premier supérieur générale de la Congrégation de la Mission*, Paris 1664 [Facsimile edition Piacenza 1986]; L. MEZZADRI, *L'Historiographie vinctienne selon les époques culturelles*, in *Vincentiana* 28 (1984) 292-313; A. DODIN, *La légende et l'histoire de Monsieur Depaul à saint Vincent de Paul*, Paris 1985. The Congregation recommends two other official biographies, P. COLLET, *La vie de Saint Vincent de Paul, instituteur de la Congrégation de la Mission et des Filles de la Charité*, 2 vols., Nancy 1748; P. COSTE, *Le grand saint du grand siècle. Monsieur Vincent*, 3 vols., Paris 1932.

³ [Translator's note: The author gives this quotation in French]. "As the congregation of the priests of the Mission has its principal establishments in France and few houses in foreign countries, the election of a Superior General has always involved a French subject of the King. As *Le sieur Joly*, Superior General died during the course of the recent war, His Majesty decided that such a happening called for new precautions to be taken to prevent the normal procedure being broken and that a foreigner might be elected General of a congregation of priests to whom His Majesty has entrusted care of parishes and chapels where His Majesty has his main residence, and one which, besides, has the greater number of its houses in his realm. Now that election time has arrived the priests of the Mission have been informed that His Majesty expects that not only will they choose the most suitable person, but that moreover they will ensure that a foreigner will not be elected." Paris, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Correspondance politique, Rome*, vol. 399, ff. 8 ss.: *Instruction donnée par le Roi à M. le prince de Monaco (28 janv. 1699)*. The instruction is also published in the *Recueil des instructions données aux ambassadeurs de France depuis les traités de*

Lacour regarded this as a normal problem. To his way of thinking a king was invested with a religious mission, being anointed by the Lord, the image of God, his vicar.⁴ It would, therefore, be against God's will to disobey the king, whose power is the guarantee of the Church's freedom.⁵ It was not, therefore, a question of cesaropapism, but a Gallican tradition which all down the centuries had managed to work out a delicate balance, practical rather than theoretical, one of its expressions⁶ being the declaration of 1682, but which also expanded into the relationship between the religious in the kingdom and the Holy See.⁷

A drawn-out disagreement began, about acknowledging that the Congregation was French, marked by some very tense moments. The Italians and Poles did not accept the surrender of the French to the will of the Sun King, and threatened to secede from the main body of the Congregation. In 1704 the Superior General, Watel, seriously considered appointing French superiors to the Italian houses.⁸

The situation worsened in 1724 when the Superior General, Jean Bonnet, had to face up to the tricky matter of the Bull *Unigenitus*, which the Congregation had not officially accepted.⁹ On this occasion Pope Benedict XIII obliged Bernardo Della Torre, the provincial of Rome, to threaten the Superior General with grave sanctions

Westphalie jusqu'à la Révolution française publié sous les auspices de la commission des archives diplomatiques au ministère des Affaires étrangères, t. 17, Rome, par G. Hanotaux, 2 partie (1688-1723)... par J. Hanoyeau, Paris 1911, 210. As a matter of fact the Congregation had charge of the royal parishes or chapels in Fontainebleau (1661), Versailles (1674), Invalides (1674), St.-Cloud (1688), St.-Cyr (1690).

⁴ P. BLET, *Le clergé de France et la Monarchie. Étude sur les Assemblées Générales de 1615 à 1666*, 2 vols., Rome 1959.

⁵ At this point there is an important omission: [**Translator's note:** The author gives this quotation in the original French] "The Visitors of France will be careful to give solid support to these warnings, pointing out that this exclusion is not of their own making and that *one may not disobey the King*": AMF, 292, *Histoire* (ms. f. 270 s.).

⁶ We should not make too precise a contrast between the attitudes of St Vincent and his successors; in fact they changed over time. Cf. R. CHALUMEAU, *Saint Vincent de Paul et le Saint Siège*, in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 5 (1967) 263-288; A.-G. MARTIMORT, *Le Gallicanisme de Bossuet*, Paris 1953, pp. 192 ff.

⁷ Regular clergy in the Kingdom had to depend on superiors who were subjects of the King.

⁸ L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 45.

⁹ L. MEZZADRI, *Gallicanesimo e vita religiosa*, in *Divus Thomas* 76 (1973) 65-109; *Id.*, *Fra giansenisti e antigiansenisti. Vincent Depaul e la Congregazione della Missione (1624-1737)*, Firenze 1977.

should the assembly persist in declining to subscribe to the Bull. The document which we have already published says, among other things, that each member, especially superiors of seminaries and professors of theology, had to sign, and that recalcitrant superiors were to be deprived of all assignments. If opposition were to continue, the bishops of France would have been obliged to withdraw all seminaries and colleges from the Congregation. It concluded: "Should it happen that neither exhortations nor threats achieve their purpose, in such a case Fr Bernardo, in union with the three above mentioned provincials, is to notify the Superior General and chapter that His Holiness will authorise the three provinces of Rome, Lombardy and Poland to have no further dealings or links with those of France, from which they will remain separated, and that His Holiness will command that they provide themselves with a different General as Governor."¹⁰

The situation calmed down, more or less. There were red hot embers beneath the ashes. Tension between the French and Italians remained insidious, with the Italians in favour of the Superior General moving to Rome. To counteract the establishment of the province of Italy (Turin), Picardy and Brittany became provinces. Every opportunity for a clash was seized upon. At the 1747 assembly the dress code for confreres was discussed. Italians, Poles, Spaniards and Portuguese accused the French of having changed the quality of the material for soutanes. St Vincent's clothes were re-examined and it was found that in actual fact the material used by the founder was lighter and of better quality than that wanted by the French.¹¹ Another clash about clothing erupted in 1774-1775. The Superior General, Jacquier, had stated in a circular letter that lack of uniformity in clothing destroyed the unity of the Congregation. Early in 1775 a brother told Cardinal Braschi that he got annoyed when the kids on the streets in Rome made fun of the brothers, calling them "Baggypants." The cardinal promised that had he been elected Pope he would have ordered the superiors to change the material for the brothers' clothing. As soon as Pope Pius VI was elected he issued a decree to this effect, of which the Superior General took a very poor view. He interpreted the Pope's words as merely expressing a desire on the part of the Pope to put an end to abuses by the brothers.¹²

¹⁰ L. MEZZADRI, *Nuovi documenti sulla crisi dell'Unigenitus*, in *Carità e Missione* 3 (2001) 134-146.

¹¹ L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 138.

¹² L. MEZZADRI - F. ONNIS, *Storia della Congregazione della Missione*, II, 346.

With the restoration it was normal that the Congregation should regain its autonomy. The Holy See attempted to profit from the situation and have the Superior General transferred to Rome. This matter was brought to the attention of the Bourbon king, Charles X, who imposed his veto. For the French government the Superior General must always be French and the seat of his general curia must always be in Paris.

The “Frenchness” remained woven into the Congregation of the Mission, as for example on the foreign missions where the confreres of various nationalities used French passports and availed of the French protectorate. This explains the case of Vincent Lebbe (1877-1940), who backed the claims of the Chinese clergy and was opposed to the wrongful use of the protectorate. The protectorate had become a means of colonial expansion. On top of this the “*ius commissionis*,” which entrusted an area to a religious community, worked against the establishment of an indigenous clergy. Lebbe had to leave the Congregation of the Mission, but his ideas were welcomed by *Maximum illud* of Benedict XV.¹³

Opera omnia

These introductory remarks are important for understanding the development of Vincentian historiography in Italy. Among other things we must not forget that after France, Italy holds the majority of primary sources relating to the saint. There are 324 of St Vincent’s letters in Turin. The Vatican and the Italian archives contain a very high number of Vincentian documents or ones with relevance to the Congregation.

There have been two approaches.

The first was to “translate” from the French. All the *Opera omnia* of the saint were translated in Italy:

- 1931-1932: *Carteggio, conferenze, documenti*. The Coste edition with notes, Piacenza, Alberoni. 1931-1932, Tomi IX-XII, 4 vols., XX+508, 525, XVI+327, 360 pp., 25 cm.
- 1941-1944, the *Conferenze di San Vincenzo de’ Paoli* were reprinted. This was the Coste edition with notes. Vols. IX and X. The Italian version was revised. Roma, Edizioni Liturgiche Missionarie. 1941-1944, 2 vols., XX+508, 525 pp., 24 cm.

¹³ LEBBE, *Lettres*, a cura di P. Goffart - A. Sohier, Tournai 1960; C. SOETENS, *Apôtre et chinois: Vincent Lebbe*, in *Historiography of the Chinese Catholic Church*, edited by J. Heyndrickx, Leuven 1994, 206-221.

- in 1959 a one-volume edition of the conferences to the confreres: *Conferenze ai preti della missione*. This was the Coste edition with notes. Roma, Edizioni Vincenziane. 1959, XX+1000 pp., 19 cm.

As regards the letters: *Opera omnia di San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Corrispondenza*. Roma, Edizioni Vincenziane. 1951-1982, 16 vols.: 1° 216, 2° 219, 3° 218, 4° 250, 5° 218, 6° 250, 7° 239, 8° 470, 9° 574, 10° 580, 11° 414, 12° 377, 13° 543, 14° 646, 15° 554, 16° 572 pp., 18 cm.

On the occasion of the centenary of the saint's birth the *Conferenze spirituali alle Figlie della Carità* were published: Edizione a cura di Luigi Mezzadri, C.M., Roma, Edizioni Vincenziane. 1980, LIV+1600 pp., 18 cm. (This is an annotated edition; the notes have been used by the Spanish edition): *Conferencias espirituales a las Hijas de la Caridad*, Trans. by A. Ortiz according to the edition by P. Coste. Revision by M. Abaitua and A. López with notes from the Italian edition by L. Mezzadri. Salamanca, CEME. 1983, 1051 pp., 20 cm.

The Italian edition still lacks a translation of volume XIII of the Coste edition, the documents, and volume XIV the index, necessary for navigating the huge collection of St Vincent's letters.

[*Translator's insertion*: What follows is about the problems of translating French into Italian, but similar decisions have to be made with regard to translation into English, even of this article!]

During the past few years a new critical edition has been gotten under way. The editors have started with a revised French text, corrected, and integrated with later discoveries. They then entrusted the translation to a group of scholars, well prepared and motivated men and women. In cases like this it is not easy to blend fidelity and modernity. One could go on forever discussing how to translate *Monsieur Vincent*. "Signore"? In the 1960s it used to be rendered "Signor Vincenzo." But in the 21st century such a rendering would be incomprehensible. In Italian the word "signore" is used about, or to, a wealthy person, or someone from the middle classes. The alternative was to leave it in French, though in inverted commas, as the American editors have done. But I am convinced that translation means taking personal responsibility and trying to utilize expressions current in our own context. Another problem was with regard to the word *Mademoiselle*, especially when applied to Louise de Marillac. As she was a married woman she should have been

entitled to *Madame*, but since she had married a man from a lower social rank than herself she was moved down a step in the social scale and entitled only to *Mademoiselle*. This is natural in French, but how are such nuances to be dealt with in Italian? Is she to be called “signorina” or “signora”? It was a subtle problem. The decision was taken to use “padre” or “signore” for *Monsieur*, according to the context, while *Mademoiselle* was always retained for Louise de Marillac. Then there was the matter of *vous*; more discussions. The final decision was to make a choice paying more attention to Italian usage. Following this, *vous* was translated as either *tu* or *lei*. *Lei* is used for St Louise, and also for Portail or Lambert aux Couteaux. In the English edition the preference was for holding on to the French terms for money (*livre, écu*) or institutions (*Parlement, Chambre des Comptes, collège*), which has not been copied by the Italian translators.

Sentences have been broken up, when they seemed too convoluted or wordy. Some expressions such as *honorer, dévotion, états, esprit*, have been literally translated into Italian, because each of these expressions has a rich resonance. We remember the saint speaking of “honouring the states of Jesus Christ.” “To honour” means “to share,” but also to reflect with special intensity, to contemplate the Incarnation in its various phases. It was, therefore, necessary to add notes which would help the reader to grasp the nuances and implications, from a vocabulary long out of date, but which still resonate with us today. The translators have been courageous and resolute. They have come up with a flowing, easy to read, version of a text from so far back in time, but near to us because of the spiritual union linking us to the depths of the living Church.

Per se it would be useful to publish the original text, parallel with the translation. Given the fact that the French text, and also the Spanish, is available on the Internet, it is very easy to control the accuracy of the translation of individual sections. In addition, in the margin of the pages, cross-references are given to the Coste edition. An effort was then made to annotate the letters in a fresh and up-to-date way, and to prefix each volume with two long introductions. In the first draft the state of the Vincentian texts and the different editions and translations was described. (Subsequent to the Italian and Spanish translations, the English translation of the letters, in eight volumes, has been completed). The introductions are something completely new. One is historical (L. Mezzadri) and the other theologico-spiritual (A. Antonello). Until now four volumes of the new edition have been completed. A fifth (the conferences to the confreres) is in the press.

St Vincent

The Italian interest in the saint came very early on. The translation of Abelly by Domenico Acami, an Oratorian, came out in 1677.¹⁴ The biographies by Pierre Collet and Coste were also translated. A translation of the biography by José María Román (1928-2002) was published in Milan in 1986: *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Biografia*.

An original biography in Italian was published in Rome in 1959: *San Vincenzo de' Paoli, servo dei poveri*, by Igino Giordani (1894-1980). A second, revised, edition followed in 1981. Fathers Luigi Mezzadri and Luigi Nuovo made an original contribution by publishing a biography, directly linked to the texts: *S. Vincenzo de' Paoli. Pagine scelte*, Roma 1981.

Father Mezzadri himself has published three different biographies, L. MEZZADRI, *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Una carità senza frontiere*, Cinisello Balsamo 1986, 2^a ed. 1989; ID., *S. Vincenzo de' Paoli. Una vita spesa per gli altri*, Roma 1989; ID., *S. Vincenzo de' Paoli e il carisma della carità*, Roma 2002.

Spirituality

Up to the middle of the 1970s Italy had shown little sign of interest in Vincentian studies. Few had made a study of St Vincent. There was no general opinion. Initiatives were isolated moves.

Carlo Riccardi, with his important book *Perfezione evangelica. Tutto il pensiero di San Vincenzo de' Paoli esposto con le sue parole*, was a forerunner and pioneer. The first edition came out in 1964, the latest re-print in 1990¹⁵. There was an important breakthrough in 1976 with the establishment of the "Gruppo di Animazione Vincenziana" (GAV). From that date onwards the "Convegni di animazione Vincenziana" were held each year.

Giuseppe Toscani made two substantial contributions. The first was entitled *La mistica dei poveri*, Pinerolo 1986. The second was *Amore, contemplazione, teologia. Gesù Cristo visto da S. Vincenzo*, Pinerolo 1987. Luigi Mezzadri, in his book on Jansenism (*Fra giansenisti e antigiansenisti. Vincenzo de' Paoli e la Congregazione della*

¹⁴ *Vita del ven. Servo di Dio Vincenzo de' Paoli, fondatore e primo superiore generale della Congregazione della Missione raccolta da quella, che già scrisse in lingua francese monsignor Ludovico Abelly..., e pubblicata nell'idioma italiano da Domenico Acami...*, Roma 1677.

¹⁵ [C. RICCARDI], *Nella Chiesa al servizio dei poveri. Tutto il pensiero di S. Luisa de Marillac esposto con le sue parole*, Roma 1978. [A thematic anthology].

Missione), devoted part of one chapter to Vincent's spirituality. In a later contribution (*A lode della gloria. Il sacerdozio nell'Ecole Française. XVII-XX secolo*, Milano 1989) studies in parallel St Vincent's understanding of priesthood and that of authors of the so-called French School.¹⁶

Some other works – G.L. COLUCCIA, *Spiritualità vincenziana, spiritualità dell'azione*, Roma 1978; P. PROVERA, *Purificazione ed esperienza di Dio in S. Vincenzo de' Paoli*, Roma 1983; L. MEZZADRI, *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Il primato della carità*, in *Le grandi scuole della spiritualità cristiana*, Roma 1984, 553-576; *La Chiesa nell'età dell'assolutismo confessionale. Dal concilio di Trento alla pace di Westfalia, 1563-1648*, a cura di L. Mezzadri (*Storia della Chiesa*, XVIII/2), Cinsello Balsamo 1988; L. MEZZADRI, *La sete e la sorgente*, 2 vols., Roma 1992-1993; L. MEZZADRI, *Pellegrini nella preghiera, pellegrini nella carità. Sulle orme di san Vincenzo*, CLV, Roma 1994; L. MEZZADRI, *Con San Vincenzo ai piedi della Santa Montagna. Le Beatitudini*, CLV, Roma 1995. The *Dizionario storico-spirituale vincenziano*, a cura di L. Mezzadri, CLV, Roma 2003, is also important.

History of the Congregation

Two histories of the Congregation of the Mission in Italy have been published: [S. STELLA], *La Congregazione della Missione in Italia dal 1640 al 1853*, Parigi 1884; a continuation followed: [V. TASSO], *La Congregazione della Missione in Italia. Continuazione dal 1835 al 1874*, Parigi-Torino 1899.

A new history was published in 1925: [P. SILVA], *Cenni storici su la Congregazione della Missione in Italia (1642-1925)*, Piacenza 1925. All these works are lacking in some respects, they are too analytic, and their framework is the houses. P. Giuseppe Guerra has published a history of his province [Naples]. The results are no better.

The Collegio Alberoni in Piacenza is a subject which has proved very productive. This college was founded by Cardinal Giulio

¹⁶ There have been other contributions: *San Vincenzo de' Paoli. Il primato della carità*, in *Le grandi scuole della spiritualità cristiana*, a cura di E. Ancilli, Roma 1984, 553-576; C. BROVETTO - L. MEZZADRI - F. FERRARIO - P. RICCA, *La spiritualità cristiana nell'età moderna (= Storia della spiritualità, V)*, Roma 1987 (capp. IV-VII); *La chiesa nell'età dell'assolutismo confessionale. Dal concilio di Trento alla pace di Westfalia 1563-1648*, a cura di L. Mezzadri (= *Storia della chiesa*, XVIII/2), Cinsello Balsamo 1988; the request for a contribution under the heading "S. Vincenzo" in several dictionaries (*Dizionario di Mistica*, *Dizionario di Pastorale giovanile*, *Dizionario di Teologica pastorale della carità*); *La sete e la sorgente*, 2. vols., Roma 1992-1998.

Alberoni and has a tradition of important publications: P. CASTAGNOLI, *Il cardinale Giulio Alberoni*, 3 vols., Piacenza 1929-1932; R. QUAZZA, see in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 1 (1960) 662-668; L. MEZZADRI, *Il Collegio Alberoni di Piacenza (1732-1815). Contributo alla storia della formazione sacerdotale*, Roma 1971 (new revised edition 2006); G.F. ROSSI, *Cento studi sul Cardinale Alberoni con altri studi di specialisti internazionali*, 4 vols., Piacenza 1978; F. ARISI - L. MEZZADRI, *Arte e storia nel Collegio Alberoni di Piacenza*, Piacenza 1990; *Il cardinale Alberoni e il suo Collegio. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio*, Piacenza 2003.

There have been various contributions on the subject of parish missions. One may refer to: *Le Missioni popolari della Congregazione della Missione nei secoli XVII-XVIII*, a cura di L. Mezzadri, Roma 2002.

Translation: THOMAS DAVITT, C.M.

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2008 ANNUAL STATISTICS - CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

M I N I S T R I E S

Number of confreres involved in the ministries listed below. Each confrere is counted only once, considered under his principal ministry, as of 31 December 2008.

M I N I S T R Y	BISHOPS	PRIESTS	DEACONS	BROTHERS	STUDENTS
1. Parish (popular) Missions to the faithful	1	119	1	4	2
2. Missionary parishes or districts	2	273	5	3	
3. Parishes	3	785	8	26	9
4. Pilgrimage sanctuaries		44	1	2	
5. Seminaries and clerical formation		113	4	3	
6. Formation of our own exclusively	1	159	2	6	6
7. Missions Ad Gentes	2	137		2	
8. Daughters of Charity (Director, chaplain)		141			
9. Schools (primary, secondary, superior, professional)		179	1	11	2
10. Social Communications (publications, radio, television)		20		1	
11. Special studies		88	12	6	13
12. Chaplains: military, immigrants, hospital, associations		130		3	
13. Chaplains: Vincentian Lay Groups		70	2		
14. Direct Service of the Poor		43		12	
15. Manual work		10		27	
16. Administration		122	2	9	
17. Retired, ill, convalescing	3	319	1	33	
18. Other	18	104	13	12	3
19. Absence from the Congregation		182	8		2
T O T A L	30	3038	60	160	37

France - Paris	20	145	5	10	160	33	1				34	27		14	41					
France - Toulouse	9	57		7	64	2					2				0					
Germany	3	15		2	19						0				0					
Holland	3	45			45						0				0					
Hungary	3	10			10	1					1	1			1					
Ireland	12	63			63						0	2			2					
Italy - Naples	11	2	46		2	1	51	1			1			1	1					
Italy - Rome	9	1	44	1	2		48	1			1				0					
Italy - Turin	13		68	2	2	1	73	1			1				0					
Poland	29	3	261	3	5	1	273	22	1	1	24				0					
Portugal	11	1	51	1			53				0	3			3					
Slovakia	6		34		4		38	5			5				0					
Slovenia	8	2	49		2		53	4			4				0					
Spain - Barcelona	8	1	41		2		44	1			1	3			3					
Spain - Madrid	16		102	1	15	1	119	1			1				0					
Spain - Salamanca	18		80		9		89	1			1	13		1	14					
Spain - Zaragoza	19		119	1	2		122	4			4		3	3	6					
SS. Cyril and Methodius	6	1	21	1			23	9			9	1			1					
OCEANIA	6	0	48	0	4	0	52	8	0	0	8	0	0	0	3	1	4			
Australia	6		48		4		52	8			8				3	1	4			
TOTAL	521	30	3038	55	5	160	37	3325	566	10	2	0	578	270	11	252	0	109	3	645

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.