

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR

(5-9 October 2009)

Rome, 29 October 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 would briefly like to share with you some of the subjects that we touched on in our most recent *tempo forte* meeting. We began with an ongoing formation session with Don Gino Franchi who is an affiliate member of the Congregation of the Mission, diocesan priest from Livorno, pastor of a parish dedicated to Elizabeth Ann Seton. He has done an incredible amount of research on her and written books, because it was in Livorno that Elizabeth Ann Seton had what we could consider her conversion experience from the Episcopalian faith to the Catholic Church through her attraction to and worship of the Eucharist.

We also had as special guests this week, Father Miles Heinen, the Executive Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office as well as Father Javier Álvarez, the Director General of the Daughters of Charity, who for the first time in the history of the relationship between the Daughters and the Congregation came to give a report to the General Council on aspects of his role particularly from the perspective of the confreres mission towards the Daughters of Charity.

1. The first item that we treated was the **immediate preparation for the General Assembly of 2010**. The General Assembly is going to be made up of a number of Round Table sessions. We spent a good amount of time discerning the different persons who would be present to initiate the conversation/dialog with the rest of the delegates of the General Assembly. The titles of the various Round Tables are "The Signs of the Times," "Systemic Change," "Permanent Formation Regarding the CIF Program," "Reconfiguration," "The Vincentian Family." We also discussed the logo for the General Assembly that was presented by Father Alexis Cerquera Trujillo, in which he makes a connection

between the 350th anniversary and the theme of the General Assembly which is *Creative Fidelity to the Mission*. We also discussed the persons who will be considered for synthesizing the dialog in the General Assembly, one in each of the official languages of the Congregation: English, French and Spanish. The Technical Committee for the General Assembly reported on their most recent trip to Paris. It seems that together with the team in Paris, things are well underway for the preparation of the General Assembly.

2. We discussed **the 350th anniversary of the death of our Holy Founders**. As many may know, the Heritage Committee has already published two themes to be reflected on in the months of October and November. We examined, as part of the 350th celebration, a report that was sent to the Curia by Father Robert Maloney on the micro financing project for Haiti. We also discussed the Executive Summary of the Projects Committee in which we were asked to respond to a number of different questions. We considered ways to continue with the project including the establishment of a Vincentian Board and made our recommendations regarding the persons who should be part of that Board as well as recommendations regarding the Executive Director for the Haitian micro project itself.
3. We discussed a number of the responses that we have recently received regarding a letter concerning **reconfiguration**. The letter was sent to the Provinces of Italy, Spain and France with the hope of generating enough dialog to come up with a process of how to best serve the poor, taking into consideration the aging of the different provinces in the Congregation and the diminishing numbers of members. We hope that this will be part of a continuing dialog from now until our General Assembly in 2010. Overall the response to the Superior General's letter has been very positive and welcomed.
4. We discussed a letter that we received from the Congregation of the Clergy regarding the **Year of the Priest**. We have decided that we would like to celebrate this year promoted by His Holiness Pope Benedict, but in relation to our own Jubilee Year of the 350th anniversary of our Founders, particularly Saint Vincent whom we know as the "light of the clergy." The Assistant General, Father José Antonio Ubillús, has been asked to coordinate different activities and articles that will be published on the www.cmglobal.org web page concerning the Year of the Priest.

5. We studied a working document presented by Father Julio Suescun, Executive Secretary of **SIEV**, in preparation for a meeting that the General Council had with the members of SIEV the weekend 10-11 October.
6. We treated **economic matters** with a presentation given by the Econome General, John Gouldrick. Among other things we discussed the economic reports of a number of the provinces. We also studied a model of a simplified version of the year-end report that the Econome General presented for our consideration and modification.
7. With the presence of Father Miles Heinen, we discussed the **Vincentian Solidarity Office** report. In the meeting we changed the title of Miles from Director to Executive Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office in conformity with the standards of his role in the world of development today. I recommend that you review the web page of the Vincentian Solidarity Office **www.famvin.org/vso**.
8. We reviewed the report of the **Delegate for the Vincentian Family**, Father Manuel Ginete, who reported basically on his presence in Yaoundé, Cameroon for a meeting of the AIC, then the meeting of the Vincentian Moderators and Systemic Change, and finally his participation in a meeting of COVIAM of Africa.
9. We had our quarterly report from the **Vincentian NGO Representative at the United Nations**, Father Joseph Foley. In the report it was made clear that today there is a need to focus with great clarity and deep reflection on questions of climate change, immigration and racism.
10. We also received a report from Father John Freund, **the web master** on the web pages developed for famvin together with Julio Suescun and Claude Lautissier in Spanish and French respectively. Father Freund is working on a number of different projects, one in particular on how to communicate the activities of the General Assembly in an efficient yet prudent way.
11. We studied different reports and information that we have received from the different **Conferences of Visitors** or Provinces of Visitors, Asia Pacific and COVIAM in particular. I would like to highlight from the COVIAM report that they are moving ahead with a project of an interprovincial mission in Chad, hopefully starting in 2010, a project of the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the death of our Founders.

12. We discussed the situation of our **international missions of El Alto, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands**. With the reconfiguration of the mission of El Alto, four confreres will be working in two rural parishes, one of them being a new member, Father Aidan Rooney from the Province of Philadelphia who arrived at the end of September. Our great hope in Bolivia is to begin a new mission in 2010 in Cochabamba with the generous response on the part of the volunteers through the October Mission Appeal.
13. In **Papua New Guinea** we elected a new local superior for our confreres who live in one community yet in four different places where their responsibilities include: one confrere, the Executive Secretary of the Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, one confrere working in the seminary in Bomara, one confrere as pastor of a parish in Bomara and one confrere in a missionary parish in Waitape. They presented to the Council their plan for community. The plan was approved with recommendations to strengthen it with the help of the *Guide for the Local Superior* and the *Statutes of the International Missions*. Together with El Alto and Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea has been advertised in the Mission Appeal Letter for October.
14. We studied the situation of our **volunteer missionaries in different places**.
 - I am happy to announce that in **Mozambique** we have the arrival of a new missionary from Congo as well as two missionaries from the Vice-Province of Nigeria who will soon be arriving.
 - We also studied a reflection that was sent to us concerning the mission in continental **China** by Father Pdraig Regan who had a new six months experience in China. His reflections were discussed by the General Council and passed on to the Visitor of China.
 - We took into consideration a request from a Bishop in **Angola** asking for missionaries. Such request is included in the Mission Appeal Letter for October.
 - As well as the continual request of the Bishop of Daru-Kiunga, **Papua New Guinea**, who once again has written and asked for seasoned missionaries to accompany young seminarians and young priests in his diocese.
 - Included also was a written dialog with the Regional Superior of **Cameroon** wherein there is the hope that the Congregation, through the support of the Province of Paris and other

missionaries can begin a mission in **Equatorial Guinea**, accompanying the Daughters of Charity from Gijon, Spain and MISEVI of Spain.

- In this *tempo forte* we received a letter from one confrere volunteering for one of our international missions and we have moved forward in taking the necessary steps to secure his participation as requested.
15. As mentioned at the beginning of this letter we had a dialog of a little over two hours with the present **Director General of the Daughters of Charity**, Father Javier Álvarez. He shared with us his role as Director of the Daughters of Charity and the responsibility of the Congregation of the Mission toward the Daughters, the role of Directors as well as the participation of many other confreres in what would be the spiritual life of the Daughters, their formation, pastoral activities as well as the government of the different Provinces of the Daughters. It is the first time that the General Council has had a meeting with the Director General of the Daughters of Charity. We found it quite helpful and at the same time, a way to express our gratitude to the Director General for his role in supporting the Daughters.
 16. We concluded our meeting discussing the up coming **calendars** of each of the members of the General Council. These next months, October, November and December will be filled with different pastoral activities. Father José María Nieto will be making a canonical visit in Chile as well as a retreat for the confreres there and an informal visit to the Province of Peru. Father Józef Kapuściak will be making the canonical visit of the Province of Turin. Father Gérard Du, together with the Superior General, will make a visit to the Region of Viet Nam. Father General will also visit CIF, Poland, AMM international meeting in Paris, USA and Italy for a number of events related to the Vincentian Family.

Please continue to pray for the activities of the General Council as we do our part to accompany the Congregation.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,



G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General