

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR  
(8-12 March 2010)

Rome, 30 March 2010

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission*

My dear brothers of the Congregation of the Mission,

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

**Lord, I dream of dying for them.  
Help me to live for them.<sup>1</sup>**

It is in this spirit of “helping us to live for them,” that we gathered in our *tempo forte* meeting 8-12 March. We began our ongoing formation with a presentation given by the members of the Community of Sant’Egidio, a movement of laity, who spoke to us of the different dimensions of peace and the different processes followed by the Community of Sant’Egidio to promote peace.

The General Council has invited the founder of Sant’Egidio, Andrea Riccardi, to give a presentation on the signs of the times at our General Assembly in Paris. We have asked him to speak to us of three significant signs of the times: poverty, peace and justice, and interreligious dialog, pertinent for our reflection on Creative Fidelity to the Mission.

The agenda that we followed for this *tempo forte* is as follows:

1. We worked on final preparations for the **General Assembly**, reviewing the different materials that will be sent to all the delegates at the end of March. We reviewed the Commission for Communication. The persons responsible are Father Julio Suescun, Brother Adam Budzyna and Father Celestino Fernandez. The support persons for this Commission will be Father John Freund from the United States and others in Paris.

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<sup>1</sup> Prayer of Father Carlos Mújica, Argentina, Member of the movement of Priests for the Third World, Assassinated on 11 May 1974.

2. We reviewed the report from the **Executive Commission of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary**. We reviewed reports from the Heritage Commission, which is in the process of producing, on schedule, reflections on a monthly basis to help us deepen our Vincentian spirituality. We also reviewed the Projects Commission through a report from its coordinator, Father Robert Maloney. As we know, the Vincentian Family has accepted to do a pilot project on micro-financing in Haiti. Certainly, since the earthquake in Haiti, we consider our choice to be providential. We have committed ourselves to a long-term process of support for the poor with the hope that different projects might coincide with the millennium development goals. As part of the 350<sup>th</sup> celebration, DePaul University has created a documentary on Saint Vincent de Paul. We will be distributing copies to the delegates of the General Assembly in the three official languages of the Congregation.
3. We reviewed a report from Father John Rybolt on the **History Project of the Congregation**. It is a six volume project; at this time, the first four volumes are almost complete and the Superior General has sent letters to different language groups in order to encourage translations.
4. We reviewed the evaluation of the **New Visitors Meeting** which was held in January. The next New Visitors meeting will not be held until 2012.
5. We reviewed the reports of the **Postulator and Procurator General, Father Giuseppe Guerra**. Even though Father Guerra has been named Visitor of the Province of Naples, the Superior General has asked him to remain in his position until the end of this administration. Father Guerra will be in the Curia at least one or two days during the week.
6. We reviewed a report from the **archivist and librarian, Father Alfredo Becera**. The Superior General has sent a letter to all the Visitors asking for copies of the books written by different confreres of the provinces to enrich our Vincentian library.
7. We reviewed a letter from **Brother Fahed Yehya** who is finishing his three-year commitment to the General Curia. We want to thank Fahed publicly for the contribution that he has made to our community here at the Curia and for his generous service in many areas that have helped to improve the appearance of the Curia and its grounds.
8. We reviewed a letter from the **Secretary General, Father Claudio Santangelo**, whose commitment to the Curia is also coming to an end; he offered himself to stay until December 2010 to help

with the transition to a new Secretary General. In our next *tempo forte* we will be discussing possible candidates for the position of the Brother as well as the position of the Secretary General.

9. We discussed information received from the **Union of Superiors General** declaring that in their meetings of 2010 in May and November the topic will be Religious Life in Europe. Father José María Nieto will accompany the Superior General in this session that will do an analysis of the situation of religious life in Europe.
10. We handled economic questions guided by the **Econome General, Father John Gouldrick**. Among the different issues discussed were the new patrimonial funds with a redistribution of the amounts of money to be received by the different provinces in development.

The Econome General also shared with us the amount of donations that we have received to respond to the immediate recovery of Haiti. We have made the decision to deposit the remaining moneys that we have received, in the account of the Daughters of Charity to respond to the different projects that are created by the Vincentian Family there or projects that the Vincentian Family recommends.

The Econome General also gave us an evaluation of the first workshop held for money management in the Philippines for the Asia Pacific Visitors Conference. There were a total of eight participants from all the provinces of the APVC: Northern and Southern India, Indonesia, China, Philippines, Fiji of the Province of Australia, and Papua New Guinea.

11. We received the **VSO Report** with the director present. I encourage you to check out the web site of the Vincentian Solidarity Office [www.famvin.org/vso](http://www.famvin.org/vso). The Director, Father Miles Heinen, will be present at the General Assembly to give a report and to answer questions from the delegates as well as to make contacts with Visitors.
12. The following item was a report from the Directors of the **CIF program** wherein we discussed the new contract with the Motherhouse and the participants in the program.
13. We reviewed the **SIEV** report from Father Julio Suescun, Executive Secretary.
14. We received the report from Father Manuel Ginete, the **delegate to the Vincentian Family**. He gave us an update on the meeting of the Vincentian Leaders in Paris held in January. The session was divided into two segments. The first was a meeting of the

newly formed Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family made up of two members each from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the AIC, the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission. Those representatives are the respective Superiors General or Presidents as well as the delegate that they designate. This Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family will meet on a yearly basis. The second grouping was the Vincentian Leaders of the Vincentian Family throughout the world. The focus was on ongoing formation and deepening our understanding and knowledge of the spirituality of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac as well as an interchange of information on how each of the different congregations and lay movements contribute to the living out of the Vincentian charism. It was decided that every two years, the Vincentian Family Leaders would meet, alternating between Rome and Paris. The next meeting will be in January 2012 in Rome.

Father Ginete also reported on the Continental Session for moderators of the Vincentian Family and their training in systemic change. The sessions have been held in a number of different areas of the globe: Mexico and Brazil for Latin America, Cameroon for all of Africa, and Bangkok for all of Asia. The next session is planned this year in the United States; the different members of the Vincentian Family in Europe are organizing times in 2011 in order to develop the topic of the Vincentian moderators and systemic change.

15. We reviewed a report from Father Hugh O'Donnell with regard to the Vincentian Family member, **DePaul International**. We reaffirmed our commitment to supporting them in their formation as members of the Vincentian Family.
16. Then we reviewed the periodic report of Father Joe Foley who **represents us at the United Nations**. He began with a quote, "Climate change is already undermining the realization of a broad range of fundamental rights of many people." My brothers of the Congregation, I ask you to become acutely aware of the question of climate change. It is something that is affecting the integrity of the creation. We need to be more knowledgeable about what is happening and what we can do to reverse the trends. One of the issues that most concerns us is how climate change affects the poor.

Father Foley participated in Rome in February in a Forum for Catholic-Inspired NGOs. They dealt with a number of issues, beginning with the financial and economic crisis from the perspective of Caritas in Veritate as well as a presentation on a

global migration authority, a global environmental agency and a desire to create a second chamber in the United Nations that would be for non-governmental organizations, churches, etc.

One final thing to report from the NGO at the United Nations is that the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity are collaborating on a NGO website: [www.cmdcngo.org](http://www.cmdcngo.org). It is a work in progress and I encourage you to check it out.

17. We reviewed information from two **Conferences of Visitors**: CLAPVI, having to do with the course that was held in Colombia for the formators and COVIAM, a report from the assistant for formation of the COVIAM, Father Sy Peterka. He reported on his most recent visits to four areas of Africa: Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia. We publicly acknowledge and thank Father Sy Peterka for the support and love that he has for our confreres in Africa as they work to strengthen the roots of the Vincentian charism in the continent.
18. With regard to **the international missions** of the Congregation, we began with the mission of El Alto, in Bolivia. The four confreres of the community live in two different communities. They presented their community project which was approved by the Superior General and his Council. We discussed and gave approval to the moving forward of a new community of the Congregation of the Mission in Cochabamba. We will begin this mission in the diocese for which Bishop Tito Solari is responsible with two confreres, David Paniagua, a Bolivian from the Province of Chile and former Director of the Daughters of Charity of Bolivia and Father Joel Vásquez, Colombian, who is the new Director of the Daughters of Charity in Bolivia. The good news is we have had positive responses from different members of the Congregation to create this new mission of which we have to give credit to the Vincentian Marian Youth community and MISEVI members who invited us to come to the area of Cochabamba. We then reviewed the reports from the mission of Papua New Guinea from the mission superior Father Homero Marín as well as a letter from the Visitor-elect of the Philippines, Father Rolly Santos, who is currently a missionary in Papua New Guinea, informing us that the Province of the Philippines has nominated a new missionary for Papua New Guinea to work in the program of the Holy Spirit Seminary.
19. With regard to **missions**, we reviewed a letter that we received from the Bishop of Tunis, asking for the establishment of a community of missionaries from the Congregation of the Mission

in this very historic site of the early days of the Congregation of the Mission, in which Saint Vincent himself was involved. It will be left to the Visitors of Paris and Toulouse to study this invitation to begin a new project. The Congregation at the international level remains open to supporting a positive decision on their part. We studied a letter from the Bishop of Bereina of Papua New Guinea, who invites us to send missionaries. At the present time one of our confreres from Poland, Father Vladimir, is working there and has made great strides in a very remote and difficult missionary territory.

20. We then reviewed the different responses from **volunteers for mission**.

We assigned to the Solomon Islands a confrere from the Province of Argentina who has generously offered to be a part of this mission in the South Pacific.

We reviewed the request of yet another confrere who at this time will be put on the list of candidates for missions for a future date. Besides the candidates mentioned, we also received letters from four other confreres who have expressed interest in participating in international missions. We are following through with the procedure of consultation of their visitors, personal dialog with them.

21. The final item on our agenda for the *tempo forte* was the sharing of **the calendars** of each member of the General Council from now until the end of this administration. Among the decisions made, Father José Antonio Ubillús, the assistant for missions, will be visiting the international mission in the Solomon Islands between now and the end of our present administration and Father José Maria Nieto will accompany the Superior General in the bi-annual meeting of the Union of Superiors General in May which will focus on the theme of Religious Life in Europe.

I conclude with the visits that I will have as Superior General between now and the end of my term. 14-15 March, together with other members of the Curia, we participated in the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Saint Louise de Marillac in both the Cathedral in Paris and the rue du Bac. 17-21 March, together with the Secretary General and the Econome General, I participated in the celebration of St. Joseph's High School in Antoura, Lebanon. 24-25 March I will be accompanying the Daughters of Charity in their renewal of vows in the rue du Bac.

I will spend Holy Week this year in an Indian Reservation in Arizona, in the United States with our confrere Father Clay Kilburn as well as with the Daughters of Charity in Tuba City in

Arizona for Easter vigil. Easter week I will be in Colorado in the United States, visiting the Vincentian Colorado Volunteers and the members of the Congregation of the Mission who are assigned to that area. Later in that week I will visit Niagara University of the Congregation of the Mission to share with different members of the staff and student body who are involved in a program for deepening their knowledge of the Vincentian charism. Returning to Europe I will participate immediately in the First Mass of our first Albanian confrere on 11 April.

14-23 April I will accompany Father Javier Alvarez, Director General of the Daughters of Charity and 20 new Directors of the Daughters of Charity in their formation session in Paris. 24-28 April I will visit the Daughters of Charity in the Province of Switzerland. 30 April - 10 May, I will be in Spain visiting the Province of Barcelona, specifically the island of Mallorca, as well as the members of the Vincentian Family and Daughters of Charity. I will also visit the interprovincial Mediterranean internal seminary in Teruel for a day. I will participate in a meeting of the Vincentian Marian Youth international council in Santiago de Compostela, returning to Madrid to participate in a meeting with the newly formed MISEVI international council.

11-13 May I will be in Paris to participate in the **CIF program for Brothers**. From there I will leave for Romania to visit the province of the Daughters of Charity together with their Provincial Director who is also the Visitor of the Province of Hungary. 22-23 May I will visit our interprovincial seminary in Piacenza in Italy and then participate 26-28 May in the bi-annual meeting of the Union of Superiors General together with assistant Father José Maria Nieto.

At the end of May, beginning of June I will be in Salamanca to participate in the General Assembly of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. From the first week of June until the Assembly I will be in Rome for a *tempo forte* meeting and final preparations for the General Assembly.

With prayers for each of you, dear confreres, I wish you a happy Easter.

Your brother in Saint Vincent



G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General