From "Finding Vince 400" to "When charity calls"

Visit of Father General to Lebanon

Europe and the Migrants

Twenty-five years of missionary history in Albania

General Information

1% for missions
From October 18 to 21, “Finding Vince 400” was held, the film festival dedicated to Saint Vincent and whose aim was to inspire young people - and not only - for the realization of a great planetary project: globalizing charity!

The festival was hosted at the Mariapoli center, in Castelgandolfo, and saw the active participation of 300 young people from all over the world.

At the opening greetings were present the Superior General Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, Father Joseph Augustine, CM and one of the organizers Alma Perez.

“The festival is a big novelty,” Father Tomaž began, “because there is a strong tendency of collective perception towards negative feelings, yet, and this festival has shown it, there are talents wishing to communicate the good, give it a voice and inspire the others to activate themselves.”

The aim of the festival is to use the language of cinema and theater to reach out to young people and involve them in this process of globalization of charity. As pointed out by Father Augustine “once the church used art to communicate the gospel, then this attitude was lost and today with the festival it is in a certain sense recovered.”

A festival that has set itself as a watershed of a profound change in the communication of the Vincentian charism to the light of the 400 years and the first year of the 500, but above all in line with the great questions of the Synod of Bishops days and which had as its fundamental theme young people, faith and vocational discernment. With “Finding Vince 400” the Vincentian Family actualizes the charism and the relationship with the new generations demonstrating once again how the charity is inventive to infinity.

Precisely in synergy with the Synod of Bishops on October 20 at the Auditorium Conciliazione in Rome, “When Charity Calls You: charity as the privileged place of vocational discernment.”

And it is precisely Monsig. Baldassarri, secretary of the Synod, to open the evening together with the Superior General Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM. “Jesus is a young man,” said Mons. Baldassarri “a young empath who is moved and laughs and cries, heals,
welcomes and forgives. Jesus walks with the most frail and the weakest. But Jesus is also poor among the poor”. And this is why, continues the Monsignor, that “young people must be creative.”

Regarding creativity, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM cited the “Finding Vince 400” where, through the language of cinema, the Vincentian Family is trying to support the great message of the Synod for globalizing charity, bringing young people closer to discernment and consecrated life.

In addition to cinema, in this fantastic evening at the Auditorium Conciliazione, other artistic languages were used to share the charism and joy of serving the poor. The great Piera degli Esposti has read the sacred words of St. Paul from the I letter to the Corinthians and to follow the magnificent voices of Sara Maestri and Giovanni Scifoni have told the life of St. Vincent with panache and transport.

The music of the girls from the Gen Verde group and the poetry in music of the singer-songwriter Ron, who framed the painful testimony of Jim Caviziel who reviewed the most important events of his Christian call and of pain, charged the air of energy, minimal, but decisive, proven during the shooting of the film “The Passion”. Precisely through that pain, that effort, the actor understood how Jesus was not a common man and invited all young people to be warriors for their own freedom and for that of the afflicted.

At the end of the event, two Vincentian testimonies reminded us how the charism today is alive and committed to blowing towards the 500 years.

The evening ended with Massimo Propolizio who lent the voice of God in the work of Charles Peguy and in the end, the talented conductor Arianna Ciampoli, among a group of little girls dancers holding a blue sky balloon to symbolize charity, he read the last and inspiring words of St. Vincent.

If the event was a moment of strong sharing, reflection and ardent desire for charity, it is also due to the intense and sweet direction of the director Andrea Chiodi.

On the 21st, after three days of intense and rich sharing of the charism, during the closing celebration of the “Finding Vince 400” Film Festival, God reminded us again of our mission and that of all the Catholics who answer the call: who wants to be great among you, become a servant.

The Superior General closed the event with a homily that not only made the point of those days, but also linked to the World Mission Day: “We are missionaries at the service of the poor and it is our duty to make this vocation known to the young people, so as to call each member of the Vincentian family to be called. Whatever the vocation of the young, lay or priestly, it is essential that they bring Jesus into the world and to help these young people we must create positive environments within which they can say “yes” freely!”

When charity calls, the Vincentian Family responds with an effective and affective love!
Visit of Father General to Lebanon

Fr. Abdo Eid, CM - Province of Orient

Father General, Tomaž Mavrič, CM, visited Lebanon on the occasion of the inauguration of a new building. This construction was completed in fifteen months and is part of the complex of St. Joseph's School (located in Antora). This school has been administered by the Congregation since 1834.

The Visit began with the celebration of the Eucharist in the Provincial House. Then, Father proceeded to the school where he was received by the confreres and at the same time, was able to see the new structure. At the school, parents and teachers and administrators had gathered together to receive the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission. The students welcomed their guest with songs and dance and poetry ... all of which had been prepared by the students themselves.

After lunch, Father General, accompanied by Father Ziald, visited the Center of Intercultural Dialogue in to appraise the advance of the work on this structure.

At 18:30 hours Father returned to the school in Antoura ... in time for the celebration of the inauguration of the new building at the elementary school. There, in the presence of political, spiritual, and educational officials from that region, Father Mavrič blessed the building. The activities concluded with a dinner that was offered to all the invited guests.

The following day, before his departure, Father General was invited by the Visitor, Father Ziad, to participate in a session of the provincial council. His visit was concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist and a luncheon which took place in the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity.

Blessed be God, the author of all good things and of every blessing!

Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM Eastern Province, USA

Europe and the Migrants

Fr. Bernard Massarini, CM - Province of France

"Does Europe still have Christian values in its treatment of migrants" asks the Ethiopian cardinal at the Synod.

For the second year in a row I have been given the mission to accompany a small pastoral team for migrants in the Diocese of Landes. We’ve increased our numbers by inviting a Daughter of Charity from the Berceau community who provides French lessons and a layman from a parish south of the departmente who accompanies the Oromos (migrants from an Ethiopian tribe).

In Landes, there are state organizations to guide them: they are 2 CADA (Center for help to asylum seekers) one in Mont de Marsan and one in Dax and 2 CAO (Center for Help and Orientation) one in the Berceau and one in Amou for young miners from West Africa.
(Guinea Conakry, Mali and the Congo); as well as multiple associations CIMADE (a Protestant self-help organization); the League of Human Rights; CCFD; Catholic Relief; Amnesty International; the Association of Layperson Families, etc ....

Berceau, having a CAO status, last year received single women (from Ethiopia and Eritrea) and this year some men (from Afghanistan, Darfur, Yemen, Syria, Kurdistan, and the Sahara).

Berceau’s CAO status ends at the end of the month and we are looking for places to stay for the ten young people whose pleas have been refused (CIMADE contacted us to follow-up on them and accompany them) and some families with children in school who were also rejected (Kosovar and Albanian). They will be accompanied by an association inspired by the work of another association born on Bayonne 5 years ago, which, thanks to its efforts, has allowed the regularization of some 50 families.

At the recent meeting of the Diocesan Solidarity Council we discussed the fate of young migrant minors who were abandoned because of lack of prospects and those who are still arriving, at a rate of 2 per day in the departmente. These are no longer supported, either by the ASE (Social Assistance for Children) or by the police who before had orders to drive them to the authorities. This increases the risk of letting young people get lost, because the streets in France are nothing like those of Africa, especially if they also present dangers. One of our volunteers, herself from Africa, is in the process of speaking with some of the young people she has met along with some of the former migrants from their country who now live in Landes ... we acknowledge that the situation is complex, but many people stand in solidarity.

Yesterday, October 18, during his press conference at the Synod for Young People, the Ethiopian cardinal Souraphiel, a Lazarist, called the attention of our European countries to their mission: “It is sad to know that borders are closing to people who are fleeing hunger and war, and that those who are closing these gates come from Europe’s Christian foundational roots? Is not Europe a continent that has publicly dedicated itself to live out Christian values? “ exclaimed Cardinal Berhaneyesus Suraphiel, Archbishop of Addis Ababa and President of the Episcopal Conference of Ethiopia, during the daily press conference of the Synod young people in the Vatican (October 3 to 28). In the hall, other heads of the Greek Catholic Church of Ukraine, a religious brother delegate, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate and of Russian People all spoke out.

“When we speak of Africa more than half of the population is young, they want to change things, they want to get out of poverty. Most of the world’s mass media are speaking about the migration of young Africans to the Middle East traveling through Sudan and Libya towards Europe but they migrate to the latter in very limited numbers because ... the largest portion of migrations by youth takes place within the African continent; we can say that we are talking about only 20% of migrants here while 80% of emigration happens within the interior of the continent,” said the Ethiopian cardinal.
“Continuous migration occurs in the absence of good governance which leads to corruption, conflict, civil wars, and liberation movements. Another issue is that of the arms trade, a huge business that comes from Europe, from America, from China to Africa, a reality that nobody talks about, especially because it is a juicy trade. Weapons are brought wherever civil strife is happening; so many young people are dying because of this. We have child soldiers, equipped with modern guns, armaments, sophisticated materials such as mines... This is the great tragedy of young Africans migrating. I hope that the Holy See, its diplomatic contributions and relations with Christian leaders will be able to do something about it. Formerly when a migrant traveled from one country to another he was welcomed, he was given a glass of water, water for washing, a place to rest. Today, to be a migrant is not easy. When many Europeans went to other countries they had more opportunities compared to migrants these days. Ethiopia is a poor country but it receives one million refugees; after Uganda, it is the second country for immigration.”

“Any stranger who knocks on your door will find welcome.” How sad when we see how borders are being closed off to people who are fleeing famine and war and - as pointed out by Cardinal Souraphiel - we ask: where are Europe’s Christian roots? Is not Europe a continent that recognizes Christian values? I spoke about this during the synod. This is also what the Holy Father said when he spoke about ideological colonialism, that in order receive any assistance one is forced to accept the Western values before help arrives. Multinationals are present in places where there are natural resources such as in the Congo; they exploit children, young people and old people in order to extract minerals. The Catholic Church present in these places has been witness to this. We have even seen people who have become victims of human trafficking there where they are suffering: the Church stands alongside these stripped persons, these persons forced to leave their country. “Cardinal Sourahiel says he was “touched when Cardinal Vincent Nichols (Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Santa Marta Group, [noted earlier]) said that in our time in the world there are 40 million slaves, and most are young people: they are in the worldwide network of human trafficking”.

“At the Synod we also talk about what we can do, what the universal Church can do. This has touched the hearts of our young delegates at the Synod. I hope that Synod will reach all young people, not only those in the developed world, but also those who can not afford to be here. The Church must speak on their behalf. According to the Ethiopian cardinal, “Before any other question arising during our time of the internet and modern technologies, there are young people here for whom the question is survival,” and he repeated it during the interview. “To receive the stranger, the refugee, every person in need, this is a Christian value, a Christian obligation; to close his door is never in the Christian tradition. We all know that those who arrive may not be innocent human beings or people who have suffered violence in their country, but most are. We see a mother, a grandmother knocking on the door for a place to place herself, I believe that this is a problem of conscience, and the conscience of Europe that has been formed by Christian values. Europe has received many refugees, for example Germany, while others have closed their borders. Does Europe no longer have Christian roots? Even John Paul II asked for this, and this request goes to every Christian conscience. “

The Cardinal, among others in Africa, does recognizes that there are [also] many young people who do not wish to leave but who wish to stay in their country to improve things from the inside. "Some people think that coming to Europe will be heaven, but that’s not the reality; they think that coming to Europe they will stabilize the situation of their family, but this is not the case. But as we come to know of the racism coming to life here in Europe and in other countries of the world, we need to remember that refugee life is not easy. I say this to reinforce the desire to stay at home and change the situation from the inside.

May we together seek human solutions to situations that so often seem deeply painful and to which our countries seem to be shutting their doors, as we come face-to-face with our complex world that seeks a new equilibrium to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Translated by Dan Paul Borlik, C.M.
Western Province, USA
In 1992, immediately after the fall of communism, the superior general, Robert Maloney, launched an appeal to resume the presence of Vincentian missionaries in Albania. Before the advent of communism confreres had already been active there. These fathers from the former province of Rome had worked between 1935 and 1944 until their expulsion that took place when fascist troops withdrew from the region. The last to leave Albania was Fr. Brunetti, who worked in Carcia and Valona, in southern Albania.

On September 26, 1993, two Vincentian missionaries arrived from Italy, Frs. Cristoforo Pamieri and Giuseppe Ferrara. Along with some Daughters of Charity from the Province of Slovenia they officially inaugurated the new mission. A few days later, on October 10th, Fr. Marek Owsiak from the province of Poland joined them. On January 1, 1994, with great participation of the people, the diocesan bishop, Msgr. Rrok Mirdita, blessed the church-hall, which was the first place of worship inaugurated in all of Mirdita after the communist persecution. The following year, September 29, 1994, the mission expanded with the arrival of Frs. Lino Nicolai and Mario Murgia. Frs. Vittorio Pacitti Salvatore Tusa joined them in 1996.

The first challenge they faced was evangelization and, linked to it, vocational animation. Immediately the missionaries realized that the young Church of Albania could only grow with native Albanian priests. And here, already in 1995 in September, Reshen’s house hosted about twenty boys coming from the various villages for “a school of faith” in order to orient them as well as to social, scholastic and Christian life, also to the priestly or missionary vocation.

When it seemed that everything was going right, the civil war broke out. It was 1997. The cause was the failure of the “pyramid-shaped financial companies” that had functioned as banks, collecting people’s savings by promising high interest rates, including 100% of the sums deposited. But they declared bankruptcy within a few months. Left with paperwork of no value, people rebelled. The government, which (before the collapse) had assured the legitimacy of such enterprises, failed to stem the rebellion of the people who, once they opened the deposits of arms of the old regime, sacked everything they could. For a few months, eight armed guards with machine guns, night and day, defended our residence. Fr. Marek suffered an armed attack on his return from his ministry and, to avoid further damage, he returned to Italy. The other missionaries remained in the trenches, continuing their ministry in a critical situation: for several months the confreres were advised to go around with a bodyguard when visiting the mission’s villages.

Once calm returned, the mission came back together.
in June, 1997, the diocese was established. By 1998, thanks to the generosity of the diocese of Bologna, it was possible to place the first stone at the Reshen cathedral. In 2000, on March 6, Father Palmieri was appointed apostolic administrator of Reshen and a few months later Father Luigi Cannato arrived. In that same year the mission of Albania was constituted a “region,” dependent on the CM Province of Naples.

During the jubilee year of 2000 they felt the need to enlarge the tents. Father Ferrara departed from Reshen to start a formation house, since the group of young people who had earlier joined up now had increased. They found a property near Shkodra. Here the Jesuits fathers have a Theologate, which presented the opportunity for forming the young. Father Giuseppe Ferrara, superior and responsible for formation, was sent to lead the house along with Fr. Nicolai Lino, appointed treasurer and Fr. Mario Murgia, responsible for pastoral activity. From nothing the house emerged, thanks to the help of the Italian Provinces, the personal contributions of confreres and of many benefactors. The church was built; a large space was purchased for the future construction of an oratory for young people; but before that could happen housing would have to come for those young men in formation. In December 10, 2000, still unfinished, it was inaugurated.

On November 9, 2002, Father Palmieri could now see the dream of the Reshen cathedral realized: its structure was one of the many listed sites of the National Eucharistic Congress celebrated in Bologna. Three years later, on 23 November 2005, Father Palmieri was ordained bishop. Meanwhile, the mission was extended to the mountain villages with the construction of new churches, thanks, above all, to Father Lino’s organizational ability. In 2007, Father Colombi also joined the missionaries. In 2009 the Albanian state granted legal status to the Congregation.

Meanwhile, the work of vocation animation had begun to bear fruit: in 2008, on September 27th, in Gruda and Re, in front of a “church” of the faithful, Arjan Ndoji made his Good Purposes, and the student Gjergji Ndreka his holy vows. In 2010 Giergji became a priest and, on September 6, 2014, Frs. Agustin and Arjan were also ordained priests. Currently a student at the Collegio Alberoni, Mr. Rroku is a student in his fourth year of theology. This small flowering of vocations is surely the most beautiful fruit of the mission, also because the seniority of the fathers begins to be felt; this will allow the missionary roots to spread throughout Albania. Father Lino, who had been a pillar of the mission, died on October 1, 2014, just a month after the ordination of Arjan and Agustin.

During this 25th anniversary of missionary presence there are still two other events to remember. The first is the collaboration with the Daughters of Charity in Molas (DCs of Naples) and in Gramsh (DCs of Turin), which expanded the mission to the south of Albania. Their missionary activity has been precious because it has made the Christian community flourish in these very poor villages through works of charity. The other event was in 2012, to accept responsibility for the pastoral area of Fushe Mamurras in the diocese of Tirana-Durazzo about an hour from Gruda and Re; there Frs. Colombi and Murgia took charge.

On September 2018 the twenty-five years celebration of the mission was enlivened by Ferniant Kodra’s ordination to the diaconate.

These brief highlights of missionary history in Albania recount the vitality of the Congregation and its passion for realizing the Vincentian charism in the world of the poor.

Translation by Dan Paul Borlik, CM
Western Province, USA
Taiwan hosts OGF for China clergy

The 1st batch of clergy from Dioceses of Beijing, Haimen, Zhangze and Jiangxi held their third and last year of one-month ongoing formation in Taiwan from September 2 until October 2, 2018. The 12 participants attended workshops and exposures on pastoral planning, social services, liturgy, and basic ecclesial communities. After staying in Taipei so some days, they also went to Taidong to live and experience the church-life of indigenous people. On the last week, they have a 5-day retreat to recap their experiences in Taiwan and of the program. Participants are very appreciative to Vincentian priests who made great efforts to fill in a great need for ongoing formation among diocesan clergy in China. More and more dioceses are requesting to participate.

Perboyre Sparks - Chinese Province

Photo exhibit on poverty

As part of several activities for September - a Vincentian Month, a solo photo exhibit by Fr. Vincent Yang entitled Children of Poverty was held for whole month. It was held in Vincentian parishes of Kaohsiung and Taipei to give awareness to Catholics on the reality of poverty among children. The photos were taken from poor areas in Philippines, Vietnam, Kenya, Ethiopia and Peru during Fr. Yang’s trip. The photo exhibition caught the eyes of Fr. Agostino of Vincentian Family Office who encouraged and facilitated to let the photos be exhibited in Rome just in time for the activities of Finding Vince 400. Thus, Fr. Yang went to Rome on October 16-26 to participate in the activities.
NOMINATIONES / CONFIRMATIONES

BORDA MONTES Rubén Pedro 10/10/2018 Director DC Peru (Reconfirmed)

ORDINATIONES

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This 1% campaign is addressed to all 3,200 Confreres.

Nobody excluded!

Because it is 1% both literally and spiritually. Everyone according to his vocation.

We are confident, 30 Confreres will feel the ardent desire to leave their proper house or province and go where God needs them.

Those who cannot leave can join in prayers for both missionary vocations and missions Ad Gentes.

And those who want to make contribution from a distance, it is possible to make donation for supporting needs of the poor.

You can find the Mission Appeal Letter on the website of the Congregation of the Mission - cmglobal.org in three official languages. Please, read it, and let me know which 1% you want to belong to.