CM MANILA 19: VISITORS MEETING

Visitors Meeting: An Overview. Only a few days have passed since the close of the Visitors’ Meeting in Manila (June 22-July 7) but there are already a dozen or so informative and inspiring videos available on the Internet. Congratulations to our “Office of Communication” and to all those who helped produce the videos. Below are some impressions of our gathering in Manila, impressions based on the videos and a two week experience of animated discussions and activities.

Vocations: Several visitors were interviewed and questioned about what should be done for the future with regard to vocations. It was surprising to note that all those who spoke insisted on the importance of transmitting our charism and in being present in the world of the social media presence and the internet. There were others who noted that the practice of the virtues and the lifestyle of the Vincentians are very attractive for people around the world. As usual, the linguistic groups were represented and the Visitors were eager to relate to and support the desire of Father General to work harder in the area of recruitment of more vocations.

Social Media: The Visitors wanted to emphasize the importance of the social media. One Provincial Visitor noted that all their current recruits, first experienced the Vincentian charism and lifestyle on the internet. These led the young men to contact the office of the vocation Director and now they are studying in our seminary. Most participants emphasized the importance of the digital technology and the mass media not only for vocational recruitment but also for the various ministries of the Congregation. One even insisted that it is a new mission area which we should baptize and evangelize. It is amazing how all throughout the world, the Visitors are aware, eager and ready
to use the media of social communication for the good of the Church and spreading the good news of Jesus ... just as St. Vincent did during his lifetime.

Vincentian Spirituality: St. Vincent was often stated: "Quam bonum et quam jucundum Fratres habitare in unum," it behooves his sons, especially those in positions of leadership, to reveal the importance of unity as an integral part of that love which inventive to infinity. There were many occasions to live the common spiritual life in the form of the celebration of the Eucharist, meditation and other prayer experiences. This writer was witness to two important events that manifested to the fraternal and spiritual element of the Vincentian charism. The final Eucharistic celebration at the Shrine of Saint Vincent de Paul in Quezon City, attended by all the Visitors and by more than 1000 lay persons and members of the Vincentian family was indeed a very significant moment in living our Vincentian spirituality. Although the setting and the occasion was a solemn one, the “Misa ng Sambayanan Pilipino” tempered that solemnity with joy and created a festive environment. About one hundred priests were present, (including Father Thomas Mavric who presided at this celebration). One could hear a needle fall in the midst of the participants from around the world ... mesmerized as they were by the surprising colorful, and lively celebration that was presented by the group of parishioners. All in all, there were many different occasions when one could really feel the presence of the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.

Fun in the Philippines. During the Visitors’ Meeting, the atmosphere and the people revealed the importance of having fun. At the airport, the welcoming party that received the Visitors was quite efficient in providing the transportation to the “Manresa Retreat House” in Quezon city. There they were again welcomed in the retreat house run by the Daughters of Jesus who left no stone unturned in order to make our stay there pleasant and comfortable. All during the week, the Visitors were provided with all the amenities in the form of food, entertainment and drinks, etc. It certainly helped that the hundred year old product by the name of “San Miguel beer” was available for our connoisseur of the international brand. The evening “social hour” and the viewing of movies in the evening provided our guests with an opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves. The program at Adamson University also provided something special for the Visitors. There was food and song and dance and all of these were provided through the generosity of Fr. Manimitim ... one of the favorite activities was the “bamboo or Pole dance” a native dance of skill and fun.

Immersion with Our Masters: The Visitors were able to have first-hand experience with the work of the Philippine
Province on behalf of the poor. This experience was had during their visit to the Payatas Parish and the housing projects. During most of the two-week meeting, the Visitors enjoyed the amenities of Manila, the Pearl of the Orient Seas, elements that are found in most modern cities. It was an added bonus that they were able to see first hand the basic needs of the poor despite the great abundance of wealth as demonstrated by so many high rise buildings going up in Metro Manila and the giant Malls found in the same area. The trip to “Ina ng Lupang Pangako” revealed the face an inner city poor parish where men and women and children who once picked through garbage that had been thrown by the affluent members of society had been able to change their lives. Now the Parish is relatively well-established and the Visitors were able to see a beautiful chapel where before there was only an earth-hardened floor sitting atop a mountain of garbage. They went to the Housing Projects and saw the houses built for the poor, many of whom were victims of typhoons. They also witnessed the sick and handicapped children being taken care of in a center nearby. Only a few years back, there was only muddy walkways leading to empty lots ... now there are dozens of houses inhabited by people who were once marginalized.

Vincentian Family: The large Vincentian Family in the Philippines had their day with the Superior General and the Visitors at the Adamson University. From the interviews with some of the Visitors, it is clear that the members of the Vincentian Family have indeed become an integral and integrating part of the Vincentian charism. Some of the Visitors mentioned that in the province they have a permanent formation program wherein the members of the Vincentian Family (lay, priests, brothers and Sisters) are invited to come together for several days in order to continue their faith and Vincentian formation. Other provinces noted the need to empower and to form our lay collaborators in ministry. There is a great enthusiasm for attempting to form and be formed by the larger family of St. Vincent de Paul. During the program at Adamson University, Fr. Mavrič expressed his great pride and pleasure at having been able to enter into dialogue with several hundred lay people, priests and brothers and Sisters who were present there. He prayed that all would continue to cultivate the Spirit of St. Vincent DePaul and share that family with their families and with all whom they encountered in their daily life.

Fr. Rolando Delagoza, CM
Province of Philippines
I think we are all aware of the importance of social media today. We cannot imagine New Evangelization without these tools. Clearly this is a ‘new’ evangelization also because it includes a new way of communicating the gospel message that is always the same.

Pope Francis as well as the 2016 General Assembly urge us to go out to those who live in the margins of society. In my opinion this also means reaching out to the digital world. Of course, a relationship’s most important dimension is always personal, a face to face contact. But in our times, to reach a person, especially when he is outside the church, is not an easy thing. First, contacts can and do happen in the web world. For young people who, like fish in water, navigate these new means of communication, the Internet is their first point of reference. So, getting close to them necessarily means being present in the media.

The same also appears in the field of vocational promotion and ministry. I’ve learned from my seminarians that many of them have heard for the first time about our Congregation and our charisma precisely through the Internet, in Facebook. Later, little by little, these virtual contacts developed into personal relationships, through their participation in various meetings for young people organized at the level of our province. And in this way, their vocation was born as well.

Therefore, I am very pleased that that our Congregation, as well as my own Province, is aware of the importance of these new means of communication, thus making evangelization strongly present in the Congregation and also in my province. I would like to thank the Communication Office for all the enormous work already done in this field. Let us all hope that this effort will continue so that the Good News along with its Vincentian interpretation can reach an even greater number of people around the world.

Fr. Pawel Holc, CM
Province of Poland
Translation: Dan Paul Borlik, CM
THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS: SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Australian Province (now called Oceania) has always been involved in some form of “International” Mission. Very early on in the life of the Province confreres travelled to New Zealand to give Missions. In the 1970s and 1980s Australian Confreres worked in Lebanon and China respectively. In the late 1950s a small contingent of confreres went to the Fiji Islands to initially establish a Seminary for the Diocese. This did not eventuate but a mission was eventually established in Natovi, Fiji and continues to this day. Then we were invited to be part of the Solomon Island International Mission.

Being part of an International Mission changed our Province. It became a catalyst for us to see ourselves again as Missionary. The older confreres became enlivened again with a mission zeal and asked how they could assist the mission while recognising that they were no lon-
ger young and were physically dimin-
ished. The younger confreres began to
dream about being on this type of Mission
and if not in the Solomons, then somewhe-
re else.

The missionary impact was strong enough
that we decided to change our name from
the Province of Australia to the Oceania
Province. As the Province of Oceania we
look out to the Pacific as Missioners. It be-
come a dynamic part of our self-unders-
tanding as a Province.

In order to stabilise and develop this Mis-
sion for the long term, the Province of Indo-
nesia and the Province of Oceania agreed
to work together for the development and
stability of this International Mission. Indo-
nesia has the lead and is responsible for
the Seminary. Oceania has a support role
and is responsible for Red Beach and the
Formation of Vincentian Seminarians. All
Vincentian candidates will belong to the
Oceania Province.

One of the blessings of being part of an In-
ternational Mission is that of vocations. The
Province of Oceania has ordained three
Solomon Confreres to the Priesthood. The
three confreres in turn have been formed
and told that they will probably not serve
in the Solomons. Rather, they are to be
ready (mobile and flexible) to be sent to
another International Mission. And so the
mission develops.

It was originally Vincent’s way. We are
now witnessing this international value
arising in our communities today but in a
modern and current form.

Fr. Gregory Brett CM
Visitor
Province of Oceania.
The Congregation of the Mission in the past decades have been on the directions toward reconfiguration, collaboration and internationalization. These directions call not only for greater interactions among cultures but also for deeper understanding and appreciation of unity despite of diversity, oneness in the midst of uniqueness, common mission in many ministries. The key to sustain these directions lies at the womb of the congregation - the initial formation. It is on this early stage that one starts to appreciate the importance of openness, emptiness and acceptance of one’s own and of others. If the key is in initial formation, then the way is intercultural formation.

Intercultural formation is a program of formation that is created from exchanges of different cultures. To be more particular, it is bringing out the best of cultures from each province or from each country to create a ground for candidates to appreciate the beauty of others other than their own. There are two important agents for its success - formators and formandi. The role of formators is crucial on creating an enriching intercultural experience in formation. They facilitate on the exchanges of ideas, experiences, habits and idiosyncrasies among formandi from different cultures. Their role would have lasting impact on future directions of the whole congregation because who they are forming would be in the near future may take roles in the province that require
collaboration, international relations and interactions with other provinces or foreign groups. Thus, formators have to be sensitive that the dominant culture would not be imposing to others while they constantly encourage formandi from other cultures to share their own. Formandi on the other hand have to be open and inclusive of others while appreciating their own local culture. If candidate is exposed early to other cultures, then he learns to appreciate his own and be more accepting on others. He knows early that being member of the Congregation is to be part of an international community whose mission goes beyond one’s nationality, one’s culture and one’s ethnicity. A formation program that is sensitive and embracing on other cultures would form future confreres who have a heart for deeper collaboration and a mind that embraces international initiatives.

The demographic changes in personnel and vocation within the congregation call for more creative ways for exchanges in resources. We may use the terms collaboration, reconfiguration or internationalization for different goals and purposes, but they all point towards the same direction - more interactions with people other than our own. Formation is a good venue and seedbed for such interactions. Intercultural formation may be a way to move forward, and forward steadily. We all know however that formation is not an easy task, much more an intercultural one. We may have reasons not to - financial, logistical, personnel, and a few more others, but the real challenge lies mostly on the mindset of those decision-makers especially from those provinces that have rich in resources and history in the congregation. A radical move such as intercultural formation would particularly affect some provinces that have rich in finances but few in vocation, that have abundant vocation but scarce in other resources. This kind of formation may find some difficulties at present as we are moving from provincialism to internalization. Yet, if we try to pursue consistently on this, the future would be easy as new generations of confreres would emerge with an intercultural mindset and heart. That time, the road for deeper collaboration and internationalization of our ministries would be much easier. I hope I could still witness, if not participate that time.

Fr Ferdinand Labitag, CM
Visitor of Chinese Province
On July 29, Saint Martha is celebrated, which, traditionally, has been the patron saint of the Brothers in the Congregation of the Mission. This tradition comes from St. Vincent de Paul himself, who said that the Brothers were destined to fulfill the purpose of Martha, making reference to the passage of the Gospel of Luke (chapter 10, verses 32 to 42) in which Jesus is received in a house where there are two sisters: Mary, who is “sitting at the feet of the Lord, listened to his words”, and Marta, who “struggled in multiple services.”

On the occasion of the celebration of my patron saint, Saint Martha, I wonder: What does Vincent de Paul mean when he uses that image?

In the Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, written by St. Vincent himself and delivered to the Missionaries in 1658, 33 years after the founding of the Congregation, this image of Martha is quoted twice in reference to the Brothers. The first one is in chapter 1, entitled “On the end and nature of the Congregation”, number 2 says:

“There are both clerical and lay members in the Congregation. The work of the former is to travel around through towns and villages, as Christ himself and his disciples did, breaking the bread of the divine word for the neglected, by preaching and catechizing. They also should urge people to make general confessions of their entire life and hear these confessions. Their ministry also includes settling quarrels and disputes, establishing the Confraternity of...
Charity, staffing seminaries which have been set up in our houses for diocesan clergy, giving retreats, and organizing meetings of priests in our houses. Their work also includes any other ministry which is supportive of those mentioned. The lay members help in these ministries like Martha in whatever way the superior wants them to. This help includes “prayers and tears” [Heb 5:7, 12:17], mortification, and good example.”

The second quote is found in chapter 5, entitled “On obedience”. In number 16, it is written:

“None of our lay brothers should want to study Latin or wish to become clerics. Their role is that of Martha. If any of them feel such an inclination, they should try to get rid of it at once as something suggested by the evil spirit, who perhaps is aiming at their ruin by disguising pride as zeal. They also need the superior general’s explicit permission to learn reading and writing.”

First thing to be said, and I think it is understandable for everyone, is that Vincent de Paul is a son of his time. Today, we understand things differently. Especially on the second date, this idea of not studying, of not learning to read or write, doesn’t sound right to us. But today I do not want to talk about the functions, of the trades, of the Brothers’ ministries in the Congregation of the Mission, but about the image of Marta as an evocation of what the Brothers are.

I think that understanding the Vincentian Brother under Martha’s prism is having a limited idea of his identity and mission. It seems like the Brother is the one whose vocation is to “do things”, and not to be a missionary and follow Jesus Christ, evangelizing the poor, as indicated in the number one of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission for all its members.

In addition, the current interpretation of Luke’s passage agrees that both sisters, Martha and Mary, are complementary. The two attitudes that each woman represents are necessary and must occur in the life of every Christian. Vincent de Paul understood this, and thus expresses the number 42 of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission:

“Apostolic involvement with the world, community life, and the experience of God in prayer complement one another and make an organic unity in the life of a missioner. For, when we pray, faith, fraternal love, and apostolic zeal are constantly renewed; and in action, the love of God and neighbor is effectively manifested. Through the intimate union of prayer and apostolate a missioner becomes a contemplative in action and an apostle in prayer.”

Finally, I would like to propose another image in order to talk about the members of the Congregation of the Mission, and to understand the Vincentian Brother, which is, from my point of view, more appropriate, as it is a Christological image. I’m referring to Jesus at the last supper. The synoptic gospels present us with the image of Jesus splitting and delivering his body and blood, and entrusting his disciples “do this in memory of me” (Lk 22, 19); what could be a suitable image for Priests in the Congregation. But the passage of the last supper narrated by the evangelist John presents us the image of a Jesus with a towel hugged to his waist and washing the feet of his disciples, telling them “you also must wash each other’s feet. I have set an example for you to do the same as I have done” (Jn 13, 14-15). This could be a suitable image for the Brothers in the Congregation of the Mission, that of Christ as a servant, who can be the realization of fraternal love in multiple services, in the Congregation, in the Church and in the world, especially towards the most disadvantaged.

Congratulations to all the Brothers of the Congregation of the Mission on this day! And, hopefully, all missionaries can make this vocation be maintained and updated in today’s world.

Br. Francisco Berbegal Vázquez, CM
Province of St. Vincent - Spain
Between July 22nd and 26th, the provincial delegates (province, vice-province and region) of the Americas met in the provincial house in Bogota, Colombia. Among the purposes of this meeting were the official establishment of the Network in the Americas, the revision of the basic document, choosing the continental coordinator, deciding on a common doctrinal and operational framework and creating a space for formation with regard to the JPIC and Political Advocacy as a ministry in the Church (especially in light of the pain and suffering of so many people at the present time in our history).

Our meeting followed the lines of action of the final document of the 2016 General Assembly, in which the Congregation of the Mission expressed its call to “Participate in commissions
of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, in coordination with civil and ecclesial organizations and our representation at the United Nations, denouncing violations of the rights of people and communities” (AG16 Lines of Action and Commitments, 3rd part.). This commitment was assumed by the Superior General and his council when they created this network in 2017. It was also implicitly ratified at the last Visitors meeting in Manila 2019.

During the week there were different organizations and people who, with their presentations, developed the most significant aspects of the ministry of political advocacy in order to move forward with an agenda that is capable of “breaking the vicious circle of misery” (Cf. VD 107) and taking care of our common home. During the time of our gathering we were able to clearly reflect on some of the essential issues the flow from our charism and thus able to rekindle our commitment to engage with the poor in their struggle to escape the bonds that enslave them.

It is important to highlight the presence in this meeting of Teresa Blumenstein, the coordinator of the Justice Coalition of Religious at the UN (JCoR). We, as founding members of the coalition, have been invited to participate in the training workshops and in the campaigns that this coalition will be developing in Latin America and in other regions of Africa and India during the coming months.

During our dialogue, it was very clear that being a Vincentian today implies taking ownership of that which the Congregation of the Mission has done in recent decades to reinterpret our identity and mission. Thus we reflected on themes such as collaboration and solidarity, the meaning of the Vincentian Family and Systemic Change, elements that are strengthened and complemented today by this Vincentian International Network for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (VIN-JPIC). The other element we need to add to this list is our common commitment to place ourselves beside those who are homeless.

Rereading our constitutions in these “exciting but complex times” and from the context of the crisis of community commitment and the weakening of the sense of human responsibility, we have to ask ourselves: what does God want from us and where does God want us to go? These elements help us to make our participation in the condition of the poor real and they also help us to incarnate ourselves into their reality and to listen to their cries and to give a new dynamism to our missionary passion (Cf. C. 12).

As a result of this reflection, the VIN-JPIC delegates of the Americas sent a letter to the visitors and the confreres of the continent asking them to support this new initiative and that to join with us (according to their possibilities) in the future initiatives and discussions. We know that in responding to this call there is an opportunity for continuous renewal to respond more effectively to our charism and to commit ourselves more and better in the fight against the exclusion of the poor and to do this in partnership with the laity and in the existential environment of the Vincentian family.

On the last day of the meeting and in a family atmosphere, the delegates unanimously chose those who will animate this Network in the continent:
Edson Friedrichsen CM (Curitiba), Aidan Rooney CM (Eastern US) and, as Coordinator, Brother Stuardo Marroquín CM (Central America). These three confreres have the mission of encouraging delegates to fulfill the objectives of the Network throughout the Americas and the Caribbean. This work is carried out in full communion with other networks that will be established in the other provincial conferences in the following months. We also hope to join the many social and ecclesial networks that carry out activities related to our objectives.

The next meeting of delegates will be held in Nigeria for the African provinces on September 23-27, 2019. After the coordinators of COVIAM, CEVIM and APVC are named and with the international coordination of the network that is done from our office at the UN we hope that this VIN-JPIC process becomes a bridge of communion and an element of vocational re-enchantment at all levels.

We are certain that St. Vincent de Paul accompanies us on our journey and helps us to respond with creative fidelity to the cries that arise from some many areas in the world. Together we have committed ourselves to communicate this good news and to continue with the defense of justice, the global transformation, the commitment to the poor and the effective application of systemic change in everything we are and do. We hope that JPIC will become a central line of animation, prophecy, formation, collaboration and vocational animation in our daily life in the provinces everywhere.

Fr. Guillermo Campuzano, CM - International Coordinator of VIN-JPIC
Leaving Manila in the morning, Father Tomáž Mavrič, CM, accompanied by Father Gregorio L. Bañaga Jr., CM, Visitor of the CM Philippine Province, Sister Mary Ann Evidente, DC, the Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity St. Louise-Asia and Sister Gratia Sato, DC, one of the DC councilors, arrived in Tokyo (Haneda Airport) around before 2:00pm.

Two confreres working in the Diocese of Yokohama, Father Roed Desamparado, CM and Father Darryl Diño, CM were at the airport to welcome Father General and his companions. After sharing a cup of coffee, the group traveled to Catholic Church in Iwata, where Father Rogelio D. Cardenas II, CM (the superior), confreres and some of the parishioners were waiting to participate in a brief meeting and a light dinner that had been prepared by some parish leaders. After sharing this meal the group traveled to the house of the Daughters of Charity in Maiko, Kobe Japan.

There a brief but wonderful exchange between Fr. Tomáž and his group and some Japanese parish leaders from Iwata. It was also in Iwata parish where Father General tasted his first sushi in Japan. It was fascinating to watch our superior general use his chopsticks even though he was offered a spoon and fork for his meal. He said he wanted to use chopsticks during his time in Japan (a simple yet profound example of acculturation). He ended his short visit to Iwata by blessing all who were present.

The next day, July 9, some members of the Vincentian Family in Japan gathered in order to participate in a meeting with Father General. In attendance were some Daughters of Charity, all the members of
the Congregation ministering in Japan (five confreres), representatives from the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and the International Association of Charity. The Vincentian Family Day begun with a Eucharistic Celebration presided by Father General and concelebrated by the 5 confreres ministering in the Dioceses of Osaka and Yokohama and a diocesan priest who ministers as chaplain to the Daughters of Charity. In his homily Father General emphasized that our Vincentian Charism is similar to the Miraculous Medal which has two sides. One side reveals our works of charity. The other side reveals our spirituality.

After lunch Father General continued his meeting with the members of the Vincentian Family. The different branches of the Family introduced themselves by giving a brief presentation about their life together and their ministry. In his final message to the members of the Family, Father General further developed the thoughts he shared in his homily and said: if anyone should ask who are we as Vincentians? we can say that we are mystics of charity. That statement reveals that our charism is very much connected to the two sides of the Miraculous Medal.

After the meeting with the Vincentian Family, Father General took a few hours to speak personally with teach of the confreres ministering in Japan. It was an opportunity to share experiences and hopes and dreams for the future. Father General recognized that because of the distances that separate their places of ministry, there is a difficulty in developing a Vincentian community life. Nonetheless, he encouraged the confreres to look for ways to make community meetings and community activities a integral part of their life.

His third day in Japan was reserved for the Daughters of Charity. Father General spent this day celebrating the Eucharistic with the Daughters and sharing their experiences.

The following day, Father General and his companions departed for South Korea.

We are one in saying that even though this was a brief visit, nevertheless, the presence of Father Tomaž Mavrič, indeed a memorable experience and a great blessing for all of us.

Fr. Rogelio II Cardenas Daulo, CM
Province of Philippines
On his way back to Rome from the meeting of the Visitors in Manila, the Philippines, Father Tomaž Mavrič CM visited the members of the Congregation of the Mission in Indonesia for about three days (July 18-21, 2019). For the Indonesian confreres, the brief visit of Father General (the successor of Saint Vincent) provided them with a glimpse of gracious presence of Saint Vincent.

This was Father Tomaž’s first visit to Indonesia. He landed in the international airport Thursday evening. After sharing a simple meal in a nearby restaurant, the confreres took him to Malang (about half an hour from Surabaya) by car to meet with the seminarists and their formators. He spent that night in Saint Vincent de Paul seminary.

The following day, Friday, was indeed a long day for Father General, and yet it was a joyful one for confreres and seminarists. He began the day by visiting the campus of Widya Sasana School of Philosophy and Theology, where the members of the Congregation, in collaboration with the Carmelites and other religious and diocesan priests, offer philosophical and theological formation to more than 400 seminarists of different religious congregations and of the different dioceses in Indonesia. Father Armada Riyanto CM is the current rector of the School founded in 1971 by the members of the Congregation of the Mission and the Carmelites. Father Armada told Father Tomaž that since the time of the Second Vatican Council, the major seminaries (there are 12 of them in Indonesia) have been in administered collaboratively (involving different religious
congregations and priests from various dioceses. The Widya Sasana school is now offering a four year undergraduate program of theology - philosophy, a year of pastoral orientation of parish ministers, a two year master program in theology - philosophy, and a new doctorate program in theology.

From the campus of Widya Sasana, Father Tomaz proceeded to a meeting with the confreres. After having listened to a brief presentation of the history of the Congregation in Indonesia and the present situation, Father General spoke about the apostolate of the miraculous medal, community life, and some future projects for the Vincentian family. He encouraged the confreres to move forward and to spread the Vincentian charisma and spirituality in all their various ministries.

After lunching with the formators and the seminarists, Father General visited the motherhouse of ALMA sisters (ALMA = the Apostolic Association of Lay Missionaries founded by the late confrere, Fr. Paul Janssen CM). The ALMA sisters welcomed Father General. The members of this community dedicate themselves to charitable services on behalf of handicapped children and adults, those who are usually neglected by other sectors of society. They also run a pastoral institute of the higher education particularly for the lay and religious catechists.

In the evening the same day, the seminarists engaged in a dialogue with Father General. Each one of them viewed this event a most joyful and hopeful experience and felt very encouraged by Father’s words.

The next day, Saturday, was dedicated Daughters of Charity and the members of the other branches of the Vincentian family. The main house of the Daughters is located in Kediri, about two and a half hours from Malang. All the Sisters expressed their joy at the opportunity to meet, for the first time, Father Tomaz. The Sisters minister on behalf of the poor in Indonesia. Father General expressed his thanks to them for their tireless dedication and for their witness to the charisma of Saint Vincent de Paul.

After paying homage to and praying for departed missionaries of the Company of the Daughters of Charity and the members of the Congregation of the Mission who are buried in a private, humble cemetery, Father General traveled to the small town of Prigen, where the members of the other branches of the Vincentian family had gathered together. There are more than fifteen branches of the Vincentian Family in Indonesia and Father Tomaz encouraged them to continue to give witness to the love of God in their ministry.

From Prigen, the Visitor of Indonesia, Fr. Manuel Edi Prasetyo CM and and the members of his council took Father Tomaz to Surabaya. The Indonesian province is a relatively young province and yet is vibrant in terms of living out the Vincentian charisma and spirituality. We have been blessed and are thankful for this visit of Father Tomaz. We do continue to pray that God will always grant him good health and wisdom. Thank you, Fr. Tomaz.

Fr. Fransiscus Xaverius Eko
Armada Riyanto, CM
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### NECROLOGIUM

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