



FEBRUARY 2020



NUNNTIA

Newsletter of the Congregation of the Mission

VISIT OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL IN THE OCEANIA PROVINCE

Fr Tomaž made a Visitation of the Province of Oceania. In accord with his itinerary, he arrived at Sydney International Airport at 22.30 (10.30 p.m.) on February 6th 2020. Fr Tomaž visited us on Tuesday, February 11th, after spending some time in Melbourne where he met with the confreres and the Daughters of Charity.

Twenty-five Daughters gathered at 3 p.m. to welcome Fr Tomaž. He entered the Meeting Room and personally greeted every Sister before sitting down to a cup of tea. This gesture put everyone at ease. Fr Tomaž then gave an informal presentation which was followed by questions and answers. We loved his simplicity in responding to the Sisters' questions and we admired his knowledge of world events (not necessarily connected to the Vincentian Family). Attached is a group photo taken with Fr Tomaž.

After an hour of conversation, I accompanied him on a visit to four of our Sisters who are being cared for at our Bethany Villa Nursing Home located next door. Three of these Sisters are well into their nineties but their delight at seeing our Superior General and responding to him was a joy to behold. Attached are photos with two of these Sisters. The third Sister was in bed and unfortunately it was not possible to get a snapshot of her, though her smile was brilliant and her face radiant as she was introduced to Fr Tomaž. His visit to the fourth Sister was longer because she

was able to engage herself longer! This Sister has admired the writings of Fr Tomaž and she gladly let him know of her admiration! She then proceeded to tell him of her activities at Bethany Villa e.g. poetry sessions with a small group of the residents, weekly reflections during the Seasons of Advent and Lent, again with a group of residents. Fr Tomaž invited Sister to recite a poem and she did so verse after verse for at least three minutes without a single word in front of her or without any prompting! Fr Tomaž was fascinated! In Australia we would say "he was gob-smacked"!!! Attached is a photo!

Fr Tomaž and I then walked briefly through the Home visiting very quickly three residents. One had been our Business Manager and on the Provincial Advisory Board for many years. Now he is in his nineties and is a resident, as is his wife, at our St. Catherine's Aged Care Facility. In gratitude for his years of dedicated Service to the Community and his loyal friendship with the Daughters, I introduced Fr Tomaž to the couple. Next Fr Tomaž visited an Italian lady, resident for some time at St. Catherine's and sadly is now bed-ridden. They shared a great conversation in Italian! Finally, Fr Tomaž blessed one of our Sister's blood sisters who is in Care.

Back at the Meeting Room Fr Tomaž celebrated Eucharist and the evening concluded with a simple meal together. 11th February was not only the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes but it was also exactly

a month before the Provinces of Australia and Great Britain reconfigure in order to form the Province of Rosalie Rendu.

Fr Tomaž was very generous with his time and several of the Sisters took the opportunity to speak with him personally about their past or present ministries, their interest in our sisters' engagements in other parts of the world where there is much suffering. They were also interested in Fr Tomaž's reference to being instruments of change through Vincentian representation at the level of the United Nations.

Reference to the wild fires which made world news! While our Sisters, their families, homes, and the people we minister to were not affected, thank God, nonetheless there were many tragedies involving loss of lives, properties, and livestock. Australians are very generous and more so when such disasters or tragedies occur. For months our greatest prayer

was to intercede for some good soaking rains. Eventually God answered by sending down torrential non-stop rains and storms which continued for three days. These storms also caused havoc but God graciously answered world pleas on behalf of our country and the dams are now no longer dry. During these non-stop rains a huge tree fell at an angle over the roof of St. Catherine's Aged Care Facility and five of the residents had to be moved to another section of the Home. Thank God, however, none of these residents were hurt. Their rooms are still under repair. The evening that Fr Tomaž arrived in Sydney was the first of the rainy stormy nights!

*Sr Celine Quadros
Daughter of Charity
22nd February 2020*

THE SUPERIOR GENERAL'S VISIT TO FIJI

Fiji, a country in the South Pacific, is made up of more than 300 islands. Its major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, contain most of the population

The Congregation of the Mission has been present there since 1959 when the first missionaries arrived from Australia. Today, it is a missionary region, belonging to the Province of Oceania and composed of 13 confreres among priests and students. They carry out a variety of ministries: parish pastoral work, education, chaplaincy in hospitals, accompaniment to the Daughters of Charity and some branches of the Vincentian Family, formation of our own, etc. It is important to say that the vast majority of missionaries and seminarians are native to this country.

On Thursday, February 13, 2020, Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, C.M., Superior General, began his visit to the mission in the Fiji Islands. Fr. Greg Brett, C.M., Visitor of Oceania, accompanied him.

Fiji is another part of the Superior's General visit to the Province of Oceania. Two Australian Vincentians came to Fiji in May 1959. A few years later another one, Fr. Alan Finn, C.M, came and remained. Fr. Alan is still here and despite his age, he is active in ministry. Last year, he celebrated the 60th anniversary of his priesthood.

At first, Fr. Tomaž came to Wailoku Hills, a village on the outskirts of Suva, the capital city of Fiji. The

Vincentian House of Formation is located there and Fr. Yosewa Naqou, C.M., a native of Fiji, who is responsible for the vocational ministry in the region, welcomed the honored guests. In the afternoon, the Superior General celebrated the Eucharist in the house chapel which was followed by a reception. A traditional ceremony of Kava was the highlight of the reception. Kava is a drink originally served in houses of a king and/or royalty. Over the course of time, it became a drink that was offered to welcome true guests. Kava is known as the pepper tree. Its roots are stirred in hot water ... it looks like muddy water and has a bitter taste.

On Saturday, February 15 Fr. Tomaž was taken to visit Natovi, a town on the eastern coast of the island, (about 65 km north of Suva). The members of the Congregation administer the Catholic Mission which is composed of St. John the Apostle parish and St. Vincent de Paul School. Fr. Filimoni Vosabalavu, C.M. is the pastor. In 2016, cyclone Winston seriously devastated the mission's buildings, especially the roofs of the church and the school.

Parishioners and school children welcomed the Superior General very warmly in a traditional ceremony. They brought him gifts: Tabua – whale's tooth, Kava and some mats. These are very valuable gifts in the Fijian culture and a sign of respect and

honor. After the ceremony, he met the students and Fr. Filimoni guided him around the compound. In addition, students prepared a performance for their special guest ... a manifestation of their respect, joy, talents and gifts.

At the end Fr. Tomaž thanked the parishioners, students and people of Natovi for their continuous commitment to share the love of God and for being a part of the Vincentian Family serving Christ in the person of the poor. When expressing his gratitude the Superior General said: "I cannot say anything more or anything less than to say thank you ... thank you from the bottom of my heart for the richness of your cultures and the warm welcome. I am deeply touched by the gesture you have shown me, by the effort and the preparation that went into the planning of this day".

On Sunday morning, February 16, the 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Superior General visited St. Angela Local Christian Community, the Naulu Sector of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Nausori. Accompanied by the pastor, Fr. Vincent Manehoua, C.M., the main celebrant, and Fr. Joe Tuimavule, C.M., the regional superior of the Fiji mission, Fr. Tomaž concelebrated the Eucharist at St. Joseph the Worker primary school hall. The visit coincided with the closing of the Education Week under the theme "My School is Catholic". It was a lively and joyous liturgical celebration. Children of the St. Joseph Primary School choir gifted the celebration with their beautiful

singing, thus making the liturgy more lively and more prayerful.

After the Eucharist, Father General was invited to another ceremony: Sevusevu– traditional Fijian way to say 'welcome', and Talano – a time for telling stories around the Tanoa (a ceremonial wooden bowl) where the Kava drink is stirred and served. Next, Fr. Tomaž had a questions and answer session with local women. Afterwards, parishioners, students, parents and guardians, bid farewell to the Superior General singing "Isa Isa Vulagi lasa dina" a farewell song saying "you are my only treasure, must you leave me, so lonely and forsaken? As the roses will miss the sun at dawn, every moment my heart for you is yearning...Precious moments at Suva... were filled with pleasure... Then forever my heart would sing in rapture".

Next, Father General traveled to the house of the Daughters of Charity at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Nausori. He was invited to have a lunch there. Four Daughters of Charity from the Northern Province of India minister in both Vincentian parishes in Fiji: in Nausori and Natovi. It was a very special time of sharing and community building for the Vincentian Family in Fiji.

*Thomas Lanyon, CM
Region of Fiji*

VINCENTIAN INTERNATIONAL MISSION IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

Salomon Islands is a young (independence 7 July 1978) and small country, that consists of 6 major islands and over 900 small islands in Oceania. The population is about 680,000, with many cultures and traditions. The common languages are English and Pijin.

The people are predominantly Christian. The main religious affiliations are Anglican (high Church) 35%, Catholic 19%, South Sea Evangelical (SSEC) 17%, Seventh Day Adventist 10%, Uniting Church 11%. Then there is a growing percentage of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists in the Solomon Islands – 8%.

Our Vincentian mission in Solomon Islands was started in 1993. We were invited by the Bishops of Solomon Islands to start and run the Inter-diocesan Seminary (Holy Name of Mary Seminary (HNMS), Tenaru). Therefore, our mission is focused on the ministry of formation. We are

also engaged in parish ministry (Good Shepherd Parish, Red Beach).

On February, 19th - 22nd, 2020, Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, CM, Superior General CM visited the conferrers who have been ministering in the Solomon Islands. There are five vincentian priests and one brother. They are Fr. Brian O' Sullivan, CM from Australia, Oceania Province (parish priest of Good Shepherd's Parish and formator in Seminary), Fr. Paulus Suparmono, CM, from Indonesia (Rector of Seminary), Fr. Agustinus Heru Priharsono, CM from Indonesia (formator and Superior of the International Mission), Fr. Yohanes Werang, CM from Indonesia, (formator in the Seminary), Fr. Lorenzio Kinika, CM, from Solomon Islands (parish priest of Good Shepherd's Parish) and Br. Gideon Tahunieti, CM from Solomon Islands. During his visit, Fr. Tomaž

met with the Archbishop of Honiara, Christopher Michael Cardone, OP. He also talked with the seminarians and staff and formators of Holy Name of Mary-Seminary. There are 40 diocesan seminarians studying there and they come from the Archdiocese of Honiara, the Diocese of Auki and Diocese of Gizo. He also has an opportunity to share with the member of the Vincentian Family, (the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Vincentian Marian Youth) and he visited the parish of Good Shepherd where he met with parishioners. Fr. Tomaž expressed his gratitude for the great work of all the members of the Vincentian Family conferrers who serve the Solomon Islands and continue to keep the Vincentian identity and charism alive (he extended a call and an invitation for conferrers to work in this Mission).

Red Beach is also the Formation House for Vincentian candidates. The Director of this formation house is Fr. Brian O'Sullivan, CM. All candidates from the Solomon Islands will be members of the Oceanian Province. Their formation consists of a 2 years pre-seminary in Red Beach and then the rest of formation is done in Fiji.

There 2 pre-seminarians in Red Beach, Solomon Islands, 2 internal seminarians (novices) in the Philippines, 1 just finished his formation in the internal seminary and 2 are studying philosophy and theology in Fiji.

*Fr. Agus Heru Priharsono, CM
Vincentian Missionaries
Solomon Islands*

VISIT TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA OF SUPERIOR GENERAL

Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM (current Superior General), during his fourth year in office, visited the Vincentian International Mission of Papua New Guinea for the first time. The canonical visitation was part of his visit to the Pacific, spending five quality days (February 22 – 26) visiting Port Moresby and Alotau (Milne Bay Province). The present International Team is composed of nine confreres from different countries and cultural backgrounds (Australia, Colombia, Philippines, Poland, and Vietnam). The confreres are engaged in multiple complementary ministries and geographical contexts: seminary formation (Holy Spirit Seminary in Bomana/Port Moresby), pastoral/parish administration (Bomana/Archdiocese of Port Moresby, Kiriwina/Diocese of Alotau), school chaplaincy (Hagita Secondary School/Alotau), diocesan finance administration (Diocese of Alotau), and socio-pastoral research and culture-related courses (Melanesian Institute/Goroka, Highlands Region). The “ad Gentes” team of four Indonesian confreres in the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga (Western Province), where the Indonesian Province has been extending missionary services since 1996, was not covered by the short visit. Other work and mission sites in Kiriwina, Trobriand Islands and Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province likewise were not visited due to time and travel constraints.

Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, arrived at the Jacksons International Airport (Port Moresby) on a sunny Saturday noon. He managed to get through the entry procedures with relative ease despite the prevalent

Coronavirus (COVID-19) alert. Coming to Papua New Guinea for the first time, he was welcomed warmly by the five confreres missioned in Port Moresby (Holy Spirit Seminary and Holy Name of Jesus Parish) and in the highlands of this country (The Melanesian Institute). The final stop in his canonical visitation to the Pacific Region and his first visit to this country was about to be begin.

A ceremonial welcome greeted the Superior General as he entered the Holy Spirit Seminary (the central Diocesan Seminary for Papua New Guinea) in Bomana (Northeast District of Port Moresby). The Bomana seminarians of different ethnic backgrounds had prepared a cross-cultural ceremony to welcome our special visitor (they wore “het-bilas” (headdresses) and there was a procession to his “home in Mission,” where he would spend the next couple of days).

After a mid-afternoon lunch of pasta and wine, the Superior General began individual communications with confreres ministering in the seminary.

The regular Sunday celebration at the Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Bomana was made extra special by the presence of the Superior General. He joined the parish priest (Father Emmanuel Lapaz, CM) in celebrating the Sunday Eucharist at the Parish Center and in one of the outstation chapels. The multiethnic parish community animated the liturgy with the traditional “danis na singsing” procession by Bougainvillean men in grass skirts and lively songs in Tok Pisin and other vernacular languages (Tok

Ples). Father Tomaž also was welcomed and gifted with a traditional “bilum” (woven bag) from the Sepik (Northwest Coastal Province). A brief forum and dialog allowed some parish leaders to express messages of solidarity, hopes, and challenges for the Vincentian mission.

Father Tomaž went the extra mile as he celebrated another Sunday Mass with the village community of the “Kunis” and “Goilalas” (Central Province) at the Sabusa outstation. The chapel was filled with men, women, and children solemnly praying and singing in harmony. After celebrating the Eucharist, the community shared food with the members of the Congregation and their Superior General.

On his third day, the Superior General celebrated an early morning Mass with the formators and seminarians of Holy Spirit Seminary. An inspiring homily on Saint Vincent’s deep trust in Divine Providence ushered in a long day of providential travels outside Port Moresby by air, on land, and even a brief chance to sail on Milne Bay. An unexpected delay in the morning flight to Alotau, the southern tip of the mainland, was eclipsed by a grand noontime welcome at the Gurney Airport. The Vincentians of the Diocese of Alotau came in full force, led by their confrere-Bishop, Rolando Santos, CM. In order to greet Father Tomaž with the best traditional welcome Milne Bay Province can offer, there was a popular Trobriand dance performed by traditionally clad Kiriwini students of the diocesan-run Hagita Secondary School.

The out-of-town visit to the maritime province had to be confined to a day, but was filled with meaningful onsite visits and meetings. The Alotau-based confreres brought the Superior General to some of the key sites and services of the diocese (Hagita Secondary School, Diocesan Administration Offices, and Social Service Centers). His stay here included an afternoon boat ride on board the diocesan-owned mv, “Morning Star.” There were also meetings with the Bishop, members of a local Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Conference, the school Principal of Hagita, the three Daughters of Charity from the Philippines, and the confreres. The

long day concluded with a dinner with the confreres along the Milne Bay shore.

Day four of the Superior General’s visit started with a morning Mass with the faculty and students of Hagita Secondary School. Amidst persistent constraints in resources, the diocese has managed to keep the coed school competitively running, with a current enrollment of 860 students from the different islands of Milne Bay Province. Traditional songs and dance accompanied the daybreak liturgy.

Father Tomaž then traveled back to Port Moresby with the three Alotau-based Vincentians. The gathering with the International Team began with a buffet meal. Cardinal John Ribat, of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby, also shared this time with the Superior General and the Vincentian Mission Team.

Back at the Bomana Seminary, the Superior General spent the afternoon session with the 54 seminarians and faculty. The dialog included insightful reflections on the Vincentian charism and the founding mission of formation of diocesan clergy and evangelization of those who are most abandoned. The seminarians were able to ask questions and address some of the critical issues that they were confronting. The seminarians also expressed their appreciation for the ministry of the confreres in the seminary.

The final day of the visit was still a working half-day. It started with an Ash Wednesday Mass at the Sivarai Namona Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Port Moresby. Light breakfast at the nearby presbytery/residence of the local superior preceded the final agenda of the visit – the community meeting of the CM-PNG Team with the Superior General. The community then accompanied Father Tomaž to Jacksons International airport and saw him off on his return flight to the Curia.

*Father Joel Y. Bernardo, CM
Research and Education Unit
Melanesian Institute (MI)
for Socio-Pastoral Services
Papua New Guinea*

THE PROVINCE OF CHINA DURING COVID-19

When the deadly new corona-virus (COVID-19) broke news among the local people in China, all confreres except one are already back home for long Chinese New Year holiday. Government forcefully prohibits

all public gatherings and restricts most of travels to contain the virus that originated from Wuhan City, the capital of Hubei Province – the place where our confrere, St. John Gabriel Perboyre was martyred.

Fr. Paul Xi, the only confrere who is not able to go home before the government prohibitions and containment, is confined all alone in the simple rectory of his parish. It is through the generosity and goodness of some parishioners that he gets his daily provisions. Other confreres, though wanting to be with their parishioners in these trying times, cannot do much because of the restrictions.

It is actually from the distance that actions are taking place to help the people affected by the virus. Knowing the gravity of the situation, the Provincial Office based in Taipei City, Taiwan immediately coordinated with Jinde Charities, an organization based in Shijiazhuang and a good partner of the CM in doing social services and other programs, to help in the emergency needs of local people especially those who are poor. Thanks to the General Curia and other provinces who responded to the appeal of the Chinese Province that somehow a number of people have been provided with protective masks and gears and are saved from the deadly virus. Local people are touched by how generous and efficient the CM in responding to their appeal. The money received from abroad was sent to Germany to buy protective masks and gears for first-

line responders and for poor people at the countryside. The demand for such materials inside China is so high that money is of no use in this time of emergency.

Despite our distance, we find ways to help in this time of emergency. One worth-mentioning is Fr. Joseph Lin, a Chinese confrere based in Queens, New York. His efforts to be in solidarity with the sufferings of the Chinese people did not only end up with prayers but with concrete actions to do something for the poor. He tirelessly organized the immigrant Chinese community to donate protective masks and gears for China. He takes the path of action from a distance in giving solidarity with the effected.

Although this new corona virus restricted and confined many, yet our charity knows no bounds. The Congregation of the Mission showed it – from a distance.

*Fr. Ferdinand Labitag, CM
Provincial Visitor
Chinese Province
February 26, 2020*

NOMINATION OF THE SUPERIOR OF THE GENERAL CURIA

Father Giuseppe Carulli, CM, has been approved as Superior of the General Curia community for a second term. He began his term in 2016. Father Giuseppe belongs to the Vincentian Missioners Province of Italy. In addition to this service, he currently serves as National Advisor to the Vincentian Marian Youth in Italy and coordinates the *Mediterranea Project*, social inclusion and systemic change project that the General Curia has been carrying out in favor of migrants and political refugees.

BOOK OF THE SYMPOSIUM OF THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY

The Vincentian Family Symposium was a gathering that brought together thousands of people from all over the world, people inspired by the charism of St. Vincent de Paul. That event took place from October 11-15, 2017 and the celebrations and presentations were done in six languages: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Polish.

Thanks to the collaboration of the Vincentian Linguistic Center in Rome, this book can be ordered on this web page: vincenziani.it/simposio. The price is 20 euros per copy and that price includes mailing the book to any part of the world. You will receive your copy of the book approximately 30 days after placing the order.

NOMINATIONES / CONFIRMATIONES

DE LEÓN Ismar	04/02/2020	Director DC América Central (Confirmed)
TRAN VAN Pierre Minh	28/02/2020	Director DC Vietnam (Confirmed)

ORDINATIONES

PIERRE Dieuvens	Sac	POR	15/02/2020
SORENG Pradeep	Sac	INS	23/02/2020

NECROLOGIUM

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
CUEVAS CUEVAS	Sac	15/08/2019	CGN (CUB)	90	72
KULAGA João	Sac	07/11/2019	CUR	89	70
HERNÁNDEZ BETANCOURT Pedro Egberto	Sac	17/01/2020	AMC	96	80
GROETELAARS Victor (P.V.M.)	Sac	01/02/2020	CGN (HOL)	83	63
DALLO GASTÓN Victoriano	Sac	02/02/2020	CAE	87	70
CABALLERO SAÍZ Ignacio	Sac	09/02/2020	SVP	86	70
JONES Robert J.	Sac	10/02/2020	OCC	77	59
DEL GROSSO Luigi	Sac	12/02/2020	ITA	99	81
PRATDESABA GÜELL Jaime	Sac	22/02/2020	SVP	88	71

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