



**CONGREGAZIONE DELLA MISSIONE
CURIA GENERALIZIA**

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SUPERIORE GENERALE

Rome, 29 March 2019

To all the Visitors, Regional Superiors, and Superiors of the International Missions
of the Congregation of the Mission

TOWARDS A RENEWED CULTURE OF VOCATIONS

**VOCATION MINISTRY
AND FORMATION OF FORMATORS**

Dear confreres,

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

I am writing this letter on the eve of our upcoming meeting of all the Visitors of our “Little Company,” as Saint Vincent so much liked to call the Congregation, from 22 June to 8 July 2019 in Manila, Philippines.

Among other topics, we will have the opportunity to reflect, share, and come to concrete steps in relation to our beloved Congregation on two themes that are intertwined:

- 1) Vocation Ministry and
- 2) Formation of our Formators

At the first meeting of the Vocation Ministry Coordinators in the Congregation of the Mission last November 2018 at CIF, in Paris, the participants’ enthusiastic response brought to the forefront a clear need to deepen further Vocation Ministry in the Congregation, making it one of our priorities in every place where we are present in the world. The gathering in Paris also helped us to highlight that we are in this mission together. We do not make distinctions between the countries, provinces, regions, or international missions where the present response from young men to enter consecrated life is great and those where the response now is not so

great or even almost non-existent. Commitment to Vocation Ministry must be the same throughout the Congregation.

During my visit to that meeting of the confreres who coordinate Vocation Ministry, I shared my belief that there is no difference between the areas where we have young men seeking to join the Congregation as Brother or Priest and those areas where now there are few or none. We are convinced that there are vocations in every corner of the world, because we know that Jesus is always calling people to consecrated life and calling in all countries. It is not a question of the lack of call or vocations, but rather of the positive response or not from the persons being called. I believe that this way of reflecting on vocations to consecrated life can give all of us much hope in the future of our Little Company, including the provinces, regions, or international missions, where, at present, the response from young men is limited or maybe even non-existent.

In view of renewed trust in Providence, in light of our upcoming Visitors' Meeting in Manila, I would like to ask all Visitors, Regional Superiors, and Superiors of the International Missions to send to the General Curia (segreteria@cmcuria.org) by 31 May 2019:

- A) the name, e-mail address, and cellphone number of the confrere who is coordinating the Vocation Ministry team in your province, region, or international mission;
- B) the program that each province, region, and international mission has put together for Vocation Ministry.

This brings us to the second point I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, which is related to the first point, the Formation of our Formators in the Congregation. By Jesus's mercy toward our Little Company, we are witnessing quite a good number of positive responses from young men to join us as Brothers or Priests.

Looking at the number of possible candidates to the worldwide Congregation, we can receive 200 or more candidates than we already receive every year, if all the requirements can be met: financial support, availability of buildings, and, of course, enough confreres to accompany the young men in the initial stages of formation, as well as new confreres for this ministry in view of the increasing number of candidates. For each candidate who wants to join the Congregation, a good discernment is essential, followed by continuing accompaniment of our young men through all the initial stages of formation, as well as that for our young members during the first years after vows and ordination and the ongoing formation of all of us throughout our lives.

Here I would like to touch on the second point of this letter: the Formation of our Formators. As we all know so well, it is vital for all of us to receive a strong and solid formation beginning with the initial stages of consecrated life and all throughout our lives. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all formators past and present. This includes all those who have returned to the Father and who, from the founding years of the

Congregation until now, have helped us and continue helping us shape our lives in the Vincentian spirituality and charism according to Jesus's vision for each one of us.

Within the Congregation, we have courses for the formation of formators on the provincial, interprovincial, and international levels. There are, of course, many others for the formation of formators outside our Congregation. Other congregations, dioceses, and bishops' conferences offer these in the different countries or continents where we serve. We all need to help and encourage each other so that every province, region, or international mission has confreres who will have the opportunity to prepare to accompany our young men in the initial stages of formation, in the first years after vows and ordination, and in our ongoing formation.

I think too of the provinces, regions, or international missions, who, at present, have little positive response or maybe none at all from young men desiring to enter the Congregation. However, I believe it is very important to have confreres, even in those parts of the Congregation, prepared in advance, always ready when the young person may come and knock on our door. We also know that in many cases, a confrere carries three, four, or even more responsibilities at the same time, so that the formation of our own cannot always be a priority.

I would like to encourage and recommend that, together, we make Vocation Ministry and the Formation of Formators in the Congregation two of our priorities in all the countries and places where we serve. This may mean that some confreres, who are serving as formators, will need to pass on their other ministries to other confreres, so that they will have sufficient time to dedicate to formation. We even may need to leave some ministries or services to give our confreres the opportunity to deepen their service as formators through courses, conferences, and meetings, as well as to send new confreres to them in order to prepare them to take on this very crucial ministry for us, who are already members of the Congregation, and for future members.

In some cases, the financial challenge is the reason why some provinces, regions, or international missions cannot send confreres to different formation courses. I am confident that, together, we can find the solution to those cases, helping to obtain the necessary funding for confreres who need financial assistance.

In preparation for the upcoming Visitors' Meeting in Manila this coming June, I would like to ask you, dear Visitors, to reflect on this topic together with your Councils, to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions, and plans. Then, be prepared to communicate these during the Visitors' Meeting in order to see what more we can do. How can we help each other, in this very important area, so that each province, region, and international mission has sufficient confreres dedicated to the formation of our own, and each of those has the opportunity to be prepared for such a ministry?

When I speak of Formation of Formators, especially in the initial stages of formation of our own, I am not speaking at this point of confreres who are asked to pursue studies in specific areas like theology, philosophy, Sacred Scripture, etc. Courses or studies for Formation


of Formators have a different goal so the program, in general, is different from the above-mentioned studies in a specific area.

From the General Curia, we too would like to do everything possible to encourage, help, and accompany the Formation of Formators. The 2016 General Assembly left us the responsibility of pursuing this objective.

May Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Saint Vincent de Paul, our Saints, Blessed, and Servants of God intercede for us!

Thank you so very much for all your most generous and inspiring service to the Congregation, the Vincentian Family, the Church, and the Poor!

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomaž Mavrič, CM'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long horizontal stroke.

Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General