

NUNNTIA

Newsletter of the Congregation of the Mission

JULY 2020

INFORMATION FROM THE PROVINCE OF ORIENT ABOUT THE TRAGEDY IN BEIRUT

The explosion in Beirut at 6 p.m. on August 4, 2020, cannot be expressed in simple words because that would fall short of the depth and severity of the tragedy. It affected seriously all sectors of our community: material, human and psychological. The Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity active in this city since the first half of the 19th century through their places of worship, administration, schools, dispensaries, social services or presence among the youth, have paid their dues like everyone else. One Daughter of Charity, Sister Sophie Khosrovian, of Iranian origin, was killed and two seminarians and two Vincentian priests were injured.

All the premises of the Vincentians have been devastated: the Provincial House is no longer livable, but we have started to clear the rubble and young people from the different Vincentian groups are helping us with this task. The warehouse of food stored for distribution to nearly 500 families has been blown up. The house, which used to receive students and low-paid employees, requires major repairs in order to resume its mission at a time when many families have lost their homes and could have taken advantage of these premises to take refuge there. The Basilica of the Miraculous Medal was damaged. The stained glass windows are crumbling, the electrical

system burned out, and we narrowly escaped a devastating fire. The Rosary and the Mass that we used to celebrate there every evening, sometimes in the presence of more than 700 people, are now held outside, taking advantage of the good weather despite the summer heat. The premises of the oratory, which was attended by about 200 children from poor neighborhoods, have also been damaged.

Where to begin repairs and by what means? We have decided to begin them first in the buildings of the Provincial House, which is home to the Provincial Curia, the confreres in the service of the “mission in the city”, catechesis for adults, senior confreres, seminarians, and the distribution of food and medicines. This House is a place open to accompany all kinds of misfortunes, material, human or spiritual; and it must resume its mission as soon as possible. To whom would we send all those wounded in life who found in us and with us a place to be heard, a place of comfort and support? We think of them first of all. They are our primary concern. They are the reason for our presence in Beirut.

When we look around us, we tell ourselves that we are still more fortunate than many families who are mourning the dead, the missing, the deeply wounded or who no longer have a place to find shelter. May

the Lord come to the aid this poor Lebanon, which only yesterday imagined that it had emerged from the various crises that have shaken it in recent years and which finds itself now in a bottomless pit. Add to all these misfortunes, COVID-19's contagion. We had been relatively spared until now; but the contagion

has been increasing over the past month, and we lack the means to respond to it. Now you will have an idea of the state of affairs.

*Antoine Pierre NAKAD, C.M.
Province of the Orient*

Note from the Superior General, Fr. Tomáš Mavrič, CM for the visitors:

Our confrere, Father Antoine-Pierre Nakad, sent us this story about the situation in Beirut, which has shaken us deeply and left a great pain in our hearts.

When I contacted Father Ziad Haddad, the Visitor of the Province of the Orient, he expressed his great joy and comfort at receiving many phone calls from different visitors and other confreres. All are sharing their promise of prayer, closeness and material assistance for confreres in Lebanon to help them cope with the great losses that the Province has suffered, especially in Beirut. There is also concern for the possibility of helping many other people, families who have lost everything, including members who have died.

In these brief remarks, I would like to invite all the provinces and vice-provinces of the Congregation to continue their prayers for our Confreres, Daughters of Charity and other members of the Vincentian Family in Lebanon.

In addition, I would like to encourage other provinces and vice-provinces, which have the capacity, to support the Province of the Orient financially in some way to help them to face this catastrophe. You are asked to contact Fr. Paul Parackal, the Econome general and send your donations to him tagged: "Donation for Lebanon".

I would like to thank you very much for all the closeness you have shown, which is another gesture that speaks of our love for each other.

P. Tomáš Mavrič, CM

THE RENOVATED ARCHIVES OF THE GENERAL CURIA

On 21 July 2020 in the General Curia, with the blessing of Cardinal Franc Rodé, CM, the new archives (historical and intermediate, those of the Postulation and the General Treasury) were inaugurated after a complete restructuring work that lasted over a couple of years. In fact, if we consider that the first approaches to firms for execution of the work and to various bodies for the necessary authorizations, it dates to May 2018.

This restructuring had become necessary due to the risk situation in which the documentation, which represents an important patrimony of the Congregation of the Mission, was deposited and which had to be made safe for its future conservation. The work was carried out thanks to the generous financial contribution of some provinces, which, even without mentioning them, must be thanked. In this brief talk, I wish to give information, albeit summarily, on three points:

- a brief history of the Curia's archives,
- the material kept in the archives,
- the description of the work done.

1. Brief history of our archives

The archives of the Congregation of the Mission preserved in the General Curia are an important part of the history of the CM and its government. They are only a part, because much documentation is kept at the Motherhouse in Paris, where the central government operated from 1820 to 1963. Subsequently, it moved to Rome, first to the Apostolic Leonine College (from 1963 to 1976) and next to the building at via Bravetta (later changed to via dei Capasso), where it is now.

Since the archives moved to Rome, 11 confreres succeeded one another in the office of archivist. Their names are:

- *Father Angelo Coppo (1960-1973)*
- *Brother Joseph Gazafy (1973-December 1983)*
- *Father Paul Henzmann (December 1983-1984, ad interim)*
- *Father Alberto Piras (1984-1990)*
- *Father Czesław Lechocki (1990-1993)*
- *Father Thomas Davitt (1993-1997)*

- *Father Rolando DelaGoza Solleza (1997-2005)*
- *Father Varghese Thottamkara (2005-2006)*
- *Father Alfredo Becerra Vázquez (2006-2013)*
- *Father Agustinus Heru Priharsono (2013-2016)*
- *Brother Martial Tatchim Fotso (2016-2017)*

For three years now (from October 2017), the General Council has decided to entrust the care of the archives to a layperson, professionally qualified in this sector, under the supervision of the Secretary General. Therefore, the responsibility for the care of the archives currently is entrusted to Ms. Giulia D'Angelo, who competently and professionally carries out this work.

2. Content and its sections

The Archives of the General Curia are composed of four sections, which consist of:

- *an intermediate archive of the General Secretariat (where documents from 6 to 30 years of their production are kept),*
- *a historical archive of the General Secretariat (where documents are deposited starting from the 30th year of their production,*
- *the Postulation archive and the historical one of the Procurator General,*
- *the General Treasury's archive. .*

The four sections of the archive, divided into six rooms, are flanked by a seventh, actually a "storage room," which contains reserve copies of the magazine, Vincentiana, and other material to be kept.

The archives of the Secretariat (intermediate and historical) contain all the documentation produced and received by the General Curia. This documentation comprises:

- correspondence arriving from the provinces for the Superior General and vice versa from the Superior General to the provinces;
- the documentation relating to the General Council Meetings;
- the preparatory documents and the minutes of the General Assemblies;
- documents pertaining to the relationship between the Congregation and the Holy See and the Congregations of the Roman Curia;
- documents concerning the relations with the Daughters of Charity (whose Superior General is the same as that of the Congregation of the Mission) and, in more recent years, with the Vincentian Family;
- the personal and biographical files of individual

confreres, which allows one to retrace their particular history;

- finally, the personal files of the confreres who died or left the Congregation.

3. Description of the work done

The work carried out has produced a radical restructuring and is of two types:

- structural in terms of physical space
- and work on the documentary material.

As regards the first type, that is, structural work, the most important changes concern:

- the reorganization of space;
- the introduction of the fire-prevention system;
- the renovation of the electrical system.

First of all, a rearrangement of the space used for archives, to better distribute the space and make it healthier, eliminating the humidity that produced mold on the archival material, and reorganizing the destination of the various rooms, so that they better respond to the present and future needs of the different archives.

When relocating the archival material to the shelves, fire regulations were taken into account (e.g., on a one-meter shelf it is possible to place a weight of about 40-42 kilograms of paper).

Given that the archives lacked a fire-prevention system, a totally new one was introduced. The walls have all been covered with fireproof panels that prevent the spread of flames to other environments. Fire doors have been installed in each room and filter doors in the corridor in front. As an extinguishing method, we opted for an aerosol system: it is a new generation extinguisher based on potassium carbonate, which transforms into gaseous particles by combustion. The system is divided into a series of detection devices that sense, for each individual room, the presence of smoke, with alarm control units, visual and sound signals (such as lights and sirens).

When these devices pick up smoke signals, doors and windows automatically close and the air conditioner switches off. After time sufficient to leave the room (60 seconds), the extinguishing gas is discharged. After the discharge, the extinction of the flames is fast, even if you should not enter the room for about an hour and a half, the time necessary for the extinguishing substance to settle and the air to become breathable again. Subsequently, the surfaces must be cleaned by contacting a specialized

company that has materials suitable for the purpose.

Finally, the lighting has been completely redone, adapting it to the needs of the place and the security measures provided for by law.

Wi-Fi also was put in place to permit utilizing the network even on the floor used for the archives, which was without it. It thus will allow the use of the internet for archival research.

There were basically four interventions made on the documentary material:

- Supply of new compact cabinets,
- Cleaning and sanitizing of all compact cabinets,
- Dusting of the Archival Heritage,
- Disinfection of the Archival Heritage.

The supply of the new latest-generation compact cabinets has made it possible to double the archive capacity. It went from about 800 linear meters to

about 1550 linear meters. All the reused cabinets and furnishings have been sanitized.

Before being placed back on the shelves, the archival heritage was dusted and disinfected. The dusting service was carried out using specific equipment and qualified personnel, able to evaluate the various methodologies to be adopted. We chose to use manual and semi-automatic dusting, depending on the material's state of conservation. This dusting and disinfection work was necessary to restore the archival heritage to an optimal state of conservation.

We now have the responsibility not to jeopardize the great work done and to take advantage of the archives as they deserve.

Giuseppe Turati, CM
21 July 2020

COVID-19 IN CAMEROON: THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

On June 19, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, launched the campaign "When did we see you?" in which the Congregation of the Mission wants to respond to the needs of the Provinces in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Campaign is made up of the contributions many generous entities and persons make to the Congregation through the VIMS Vincentian International Mission Service, Office. Today we want to present the response of the Vice Province of Cameroon for the poor in this difficult time.

On the origin of the project

When the Generalate asked the Visitors to inform each other about what is happening in their countries and in their provinces concerning Covid-19, this showed that the pandemic was having disastrous consequences on the human, social, economic, ecological, political, and religious levels by revealing the precariousness, the uncertainties, the hesitations, the fears of people and of administrative and medical, religious and membership organizations.

But many had also highlighted certain positive aspects such as the virtues of humility and simplicity, the importance of listening and speaking less, the strengthening of bonds and community times. Regarding the response to the pandemic, while

some provinces had more practical contributions, others, like Cameroon, were limited to raising awareness within our own works and those entrusted to us, via social networks, in partnership with indications from the government and the WHO.

From the availability of funds to immediate preparation

The surprise about the availability of funds and the importance of building a local and provincial response project to the Coronavirus mobilized the vice-province which felt deprived by limiting itself exclusively to raising awareness during celebrations and by social networking. Without delay, the anti Covid-19 kits were put in place: face masks, hydro-alcoholic gels, digital thermometers, soaps, and buckets with taps. Doctors were also contacted to raise awareness among beneficiaries during the distribution.

Given the funds available and our 12 locales, the confreres worked with the pastors, parish councils, traditional authorities, Caritas, and the Vincentian Family to select 600 of the poorest families, or 50 families per locale. These are large, single-parent families, widows and those with low incomes, the elderly, or those with access to no more than one meal per day, whether they are Catholic or not, believers or not.

Distribution of the aid packages

Before the implementation phase of the project, a communication campaign was made on national and local radios, as well as on social networks. When the different clean and entrusted structures directed by the Vincentians had agreed on precise dates and a well-arranged program, the distributions started with Nyamfende and Abam in the diocese of Kribi. At each stage, until the end of August 2020, the Vice-Province, the Vincentian Family, and the medical staff will travel to join the local communities, the recipients of the kits, the traditional authorities, and the diocesan leaders for this

human, spiritual, ecclesial and Vincentian moment.

The end of each ceremony gives rise to rejoicings as a sign of joy, shared meals as a sign of communion and gratitude, words of encouragement for being able to join them in their marginality, prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord, and words of gratitude to the Congregation of the Mission for its closeness and this unexpected support.

*Guénolé Feugang, CM
Visitor Vice Province of Cameroon*

REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONGREGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

As you may know, I began on July 1st as the congregation's NGO representative at the United Nations. It is both a privilege to be asked to do this by the Superior General and his Council, and also a responsibility I do not take lightly. It is also a challenge to follow Guillermo Campuzano in this position since he brought so much energy and dedication to the work.

So I am in preparation mode every day, trying to speak to experienced people, make contacts, and otherwise "get inside" the UN even though the organization, like so much else, is closed, probably until 2021. The current pandemic we all deal with has changed the way so much is done.

Zoom is the word of the day. This communication tool for virtual meetings is absolutely key at this time. Every meeting seems to be by Zoom. It's possible to "zoom" morning and afternoon on a daily basis because of the large number of committees and working groups of NGOs.

Every time I join these virtual meetings, however, I think of the millions of impoverished around the world who do not have computers or lack reliable connectivity to stay in touch with events and be able at least to communicate. Connectivity is fast becoming a right that must be guaranteed to all.

The previous representatives have been especially helpful in assisting me to prepare well for this role. Both Joe Foley and Guillermo (Memo) have spent considerable time with me and are always ready to respond to further questions.

As you have previously heard, the Vincentian Family NGO representatives accomplished something very

significant over the past two years. They worked successfully to present a resolution which was subsequently adopted by a key UN committee endorsing homelessness as a critical issue to be addressed within the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals, the "2030 global agenda." This represents the first time homelessness appears as a free-standing issue for the UN.

At this writing, the Working Group to Erase Homelessness (WGEH) is drafting a second resolution building on the first. If passed, this would commit the UN to speak about and take significant steps to address global homelessness in all its forms.

On a personal level, as your representative, I plan to join several groups initially as experience helps a long-range vision to emerge. Certainly the Homelessness Working Group, subject of the Family's global commitment in celebration of the 400th anniversary, the Mining working group (dedicated to issues especially concerning the Global South and the fate of indigenous peoples), and the Social Development Committee. And of course VIN-JPIC, which Memo started to develop with the provinces. Presence at some RUN meetings (Religious at the UN) will help with networking.

Let us join in prayer that God bless the work of the congregation at the UN!

*Jim Claffey
claffey44@gmail.com
UN NGO Congregation of the Mission Representative*

THE LOGO AND THE WEBSITE OF THE 43RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 2022

Do you know when is the next General Assembly? Do you know the theme? Do you want to know what if there is a logo approved for that gathering?

Are you seeking information about Documentum Laboris of the coming General Assembly? Are there any instructions for Domestic and Provincial Assemblies?

The Preparation Commission released a letter giving answers to these and many other questions regarding preparations to the most important event in the life of the Congregation of the Mission.

More information can be found in the new website: <https://nuntia.eu/wwwAG2022CM-ENG> which was launched, too. The Commission encourages you to visit it and follow updates on preparations to General Assembly

VINFLIX: A NEW COMMUNICATION TOOL IN THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY

<https://vinflix.net> Vinflix: A new communication tool in the Vincentian Family **creatively explore the Vincentian call to globalize charity**. In continuity with what was experienced during the festival “*Finding Vince 400*”, celebrated in Rome from October 18 to 21, 2018, we hope, on this website, to continue to tell stories that will change our perspective on poverty.

We begin with a small selection of videos, with the intention of increasing the content of this site periodically and frequently. The site is available in five languages: English, Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese.

In the Vincentian Family we are convinced that **artists can bring about positive changes in this world**. For this reason, <https://vinflix.net> emerges as the creative expression of artists who advocate the globalization of charity. It is an integral part of

the communications network and the ministry of the members of the Vincentian Family who, together with those who are poor, are engaged in a struggle against poverty of every kind.

Our intention is **to support 21st century storytellers and motivate the viewer with movies that change our perspective on poverty** in our communities, and **to share the charism through creativity inspired by the Vincentian mission to globalize charity**.

by Vincentian Family Office

UNPUBLISHED TEXTS OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

John E. Rybolt surprises us again. With his characteristic investigative erudition and his arduous experience in the study of Vincentian archives, he now puts in our hands a new collection of some 650 original unpublished texts by Saint Vincent de Paul.

This is a collection which adds to the huge list of materials available and now easily accessible that are provided for researchers and students around the world.

Rybolt's new collection respects the traditional structure of Pierre Coste's works published between 1920-1925, organized in four volumes: letters, conferences, and two of documents. In particular, this new collection offers us:

1. A good number of letters not yet published: correspondence that the saint sends and receives throughout his life, and a series of letters are added at the end whose date is not possible to establish. An

interesting novelty is that Rybolt offers us eighteen letters between confreres who during the time of M. Vincent.

2. Original Saint Vincent Conferences and their “elegantly improved” version by Abelly and by Coste, so that readers can compare them. In addition, there are a good number of excerpts from conferences and sayings of Saint Vincent. The latter are mostly on frequent themes of the saint: virtues, Divine Providence, formation of the clergy, the poor, the will of God, among others.

3. Documents structured in the same order as Coste: the saint’s life , the Congregation of the Mission, the Ladies of Charity, and the Daughters of Charity, although these last two are fewer than the first.

Among the many documents on the life of Saint Vincent, we can find his testament drawn up in 1630, and the bulls for beatification and canonization. Also included is a collection of short notes that were composed by Joseph Guichard, C.M. in 1941 in Paris with the title “Contemporaries and friends of Saint Vincent de Paul,” and which Rybolt now publishes in a wonderful way. It refers to a series of pieces that allude to M. Vincent or his works, and there are even some praises that the saint received during his life. Some of the names that shine in this collection are: Adrien Bourdoise (1584-1655); the famous doctor of the Sorbonne and spiritual director of M. Vincent, André Duval (1564-1638); Cardinal François de la Rochefoucauld (1558-1645), among many others. This collection represents a meticulous work of consulting various sources to make these treasures of Vincentian studies available to us.

Where did Rybolt acquire all these previously unknown texts? The summaries of Bertrand Ducournau; the notebooks of the saint’s secretary, Brother Louis Robineau; materials of the secretary general of the Congregation of the Mission in the time of Fr. Etienne, Father Jean-Baptiste Pémartin, some of which, for unknown reasons, Pierre Coste, although following in the footsteps of his predecessor, did not decide to publish; the valuable contributions of Father Bernard Koch; the archives of the Mother House in Paris; and the work of a group of scholars from the National University of Ireland found in the archives of Propaganda Fide in Rome. In any case, Rybolt has faithfully noted the sources at the beginning of each text.

The texts are originally in French, with a few in Latin or Italian, but they have been translated entirely into English. Hopefully soon we can count a Spanish version. The Rybolt collection is good news for the

Congregation of the Mission and for all Vincentians who like to drink from the foundational well where our identity is revitalized in order to assume with missionary spirit the challenges that are presented to us today.

To find the collection you can enter the site:

<https://via.library.depaul.edu/lcd/>

*Rolando Gutiérrez CM.
Vice Province of Costa Rica*

ORDINATIONES

RABEJE Vincent II	Sac	PHI	25/07/2020
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NECROLOGIUM

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
FRIAS JEREZ Luciano	Sac	08/07/2020	POR	46	24
PASSAROTTO Albano	Sac	21/07/2020	MAD	80	62
PASTOR SERRA Vicente	Sac	22/07/2020	SVP	93	78
ALDANA ÁNGELS José Alfredo	Sac	27/07/2020	MEX	39	16
ŠÁŠIK Milan	Bis	14/07/2020	SLV	85	67

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