

FROM THE GENERAL CURIA

Tempo Forte Circular

June 15-19, 2015

Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your heart now and forever!

We began our *Tempo Forte* meeting with our second Domestic Assembly meeting in preparation for the General Assembly. We then discussed the following matters:

Gathering of CM Bishops. This will be the first in the history of the Congregation. At this time, we are expecting 20 Bishops from the Congregation, who will gather on Via Ezio in Rome, for three days, from 23-25 June, in order to speak about their role as Bishops in the context of being members of the Congregation of the Mission and in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul. We have a total of 34 Bishops in the Congregation of the Mission and we consider the participation of 20 out of 34 to be very positive.

Meeting of Mission Superiors. We did further planning for this meeting, which will be held from 14-18 September and is obligatory for all superiors of international missions. We have also invited the superiors of regions and of missions of provinces to participate, if they so desire. Because the mission superiors are being invited, we had to update our present superiors on the international missions. Father Aidan Rooney has been confirmed for another three-year term in Bolivia. Father Marcos Gumieiro has been named superior of the Angola mission. Father Marcos is from the Province of Curitiba, Brazil, and has been in Angola for a number of months. For our newly formed mission in Alaska, we have asked Father Andrew Bellisario, former Director of the Daughters of Charity and former Visitor of the Province of the West of the United States, to assume the responsibility of superior. With regard to the Solomon Islands, Father Mathew Kallammakal, Assistant General, will be making a visitation of the mission and will do a consultation for superior, because the present one, Father Jose Manjaly, is leaving at the end of this year.

Meeting of New Visitors. This is scheduled for 10-20 January 2016. The Commission named to plan this event is composed of Fathers

Giuseppe Turati, Secretary General; Stanislav Zonták, Assistant General; and Eli Chaves dos Santos, Assistant General.

General Assembly. This is scheduled for 27 June - 15 July 2016. We have agreed to a proposal from the coordinator to include in the segment on the Vincentian Family a video of an example of collaboration in one of the provinces of the Congregation. The General Council is proposing two postulates to be considered at the General Assembly. They have to do with already existing Statutes; that is, Statute 68, § 1 and Statute 89, § 2. We also planned another day of formation for the General Council in preparation for the General Assembly to discuss the matter of evangelization, especially in Europe. We likewise considered the cost of the General Assembly, which will be assumed in part by DePaul University, in part by the provinces of the United States, and in part by the other provinces assisting at the General Assembly.

Reconfiguration. Father Turati took part in the official celebration of the coming together of the Provinces of Austria and Germany and also participated in the Provincial Assembly of the new Austrian-German Province.

Permanent Deacons in the CM. We received a letter from a confrere on this topic. We directed him to the Province of Paris, as well to a confrere of that province, who is doing his thesis on the possibility of married permanent deacons being members of the Congregation of the Mission.

General Curia House. We are holding a consultation for a new superior/administrator of the General Curia House because, for reasons of health, Father Mario Di Carlo has been relieved of this responsibility.

We also discussed the arrival of a new member of the community, Brother L'ubmoír Žemla, who previously worked in the Curia House, has graciously offered to return. He will join us in August. At the same time, we wish to offer our deepest and most respectful thanks to Father Vincent Zonták, from the Province of Slovakia, who has generously given of his time to assisting us in the kitchen during the one-year sabbatical he took. His presence, not only in the kitchen, but also in the community, was very much appreciated and the members of the Curia House have shown him how grateful they are. We will be welcoming another confrere to the Curia House, Father Álvaro Mauricio Fernández, who will be responsible for *Vincentiana*, replacing Father John Maher. We are grateful to the latter for the service he has provided to the Congregation of the Mission as he now returns to his Province of Origin to take up a new apostolic ministry. Father Álvaro Mauricio will assume the responsibility of assistant to the Secretary General too.

Communications. We treated the report from the former Director of Communications, Father John Maher. Father Jorge Luis Rodriguez will become Director of Communications and will do the transition while waiting for Father Álvaro Mauricio to prepare the next issue of *Vincentiana*.

The FamVin website has now assumed, in the new strategic plan, a different title, "FamVin: Connecting, Collaborating, and Evangelizing." We discussed the report that was sent to us by the new soon-to-be coordinator of the Vincentian Family Website, Father Aidan Rooney. He is in the process of transitioning with Father John Freund and will formally begin his responsibility in September, but will continue to be based at the international mission in Bolivia. The core team of FamVin, along with Father Rooney, is comprised of Beth Nicol, Monica Watson, and Toma Zielinski. Also collaborating with FamVin will be Javier Chento from Spain. They hope to involve other members of the Vincentian Family from different parts of the world. I think the core team, which has collaborated with Father John Freund, who will continue to be a consultant, has worked very hard in developing FamVin and we hope that it will continue to move the website forward into the future.

Inter-Religious Dialog. We studied a report from Father Claudio Santangelo, coordinator of the Inter-Religious Working Group, regarding his responsibility as coordinator, as well as the research that he is doing to help us prepare a project for the General Assembly as a way of celebrating our 400th anniversary. For this occasion, we hope to expand the presence of the Congregation of the Mission in Muslim areas of the world. Claudio also included a report on the Commission for Interreligious Dialog of the Union of Superiors General. He represents the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission on this Commission.

Presidents of Vincentian Universities. We also received a report from Father John Maher who represented the Superior General at a meeting of the Presidents of Vincentian Universities. The four presidents, three from the United States and one from the Philippines, were joined in this meeting by the presidents of a college in our Province of South India and one of the colleges of the Sisters of Charity in the United States. Others have been invited and we hope to increase participation. Those who met have assumed responsibility for this annual meeting and are calling themselves the Vincentian Conference of Presidents. The first coordinator of the Conference is Father James Maher, President of Niagara University. An article describing this newly formed Conference will be written and published.

Vincentian Solidarity Office. We reviewed the report from the VSO Director and are happy to announce that the Vincentian Endowment Challenge Campaign has ended after a five long years of raising US \$5 million, which was matched by a donor, to help support a number of provinces in developing countries and the branches of the Vincentian Family under the responsibility of the Superior General. Special recognition should be given to Father Miles Heinen, Director, and Mr. Scott Fina, Assistant Director, for the fine work they have done over the years in working on this campaign, along with a former coworker, Theresa Niedda. A team of consultants, led by Father Donald Harrington, also graciously supported and assisted the VSO team in reaching this goal. This Campaign showed huge solidarity with mission among the members of the Congregation of the Mission, because even all of the beneficiaries contributed to the cause. Over 80% of the funds came from CM sources: the General Curia, provinces, confreres, and their wills. The Superior General has recommended to the VSO that it increase the provinces that actively support the VSO with yearly funding for matching funds and micro projects. In the past, the VSO has relied heavily on the provinces of the United States, but has received other donations from some provinces in the Congregation. The Superior General hopes that all provinces, including many who are beneficiaries of the VSO's efforts, will also contribute. In their responses to a letter he sent them, they have led the Superior General to believe they will do so. In the absence of the former member of the VSO team, Father Heinen has told us that he has been receiving help from Mrs. María José Pacheco, who has volunteered her time supporting the different efforts of the VSO Office. She is fluent in both English and Spanish. We thank her and welcome her to the VSO team in her capacity as a volunteer.

CM Representative at the UN. The confrere selected for this role will transition with Father Joseph Foley, who has served in this capacity since the administration of our former Superior General, Father Robert P. Maloney. Father Foley has done a fine job in these years of representing the Congregation and working together with other religious, particularly members of the Vincentian Family.

Financial Matters. We discussed the house on Via della Nocetta, the house on the property of the General Curia, which sits behind the main building, and our plans to renovate this with the hope of either renting or selling it in order to provide further income to sustain the operational costs of the General Curia.

Together with the Treasurer General and the Assistant General for the Missions, we discussed the amounts of financial support that will be dispersed from the Mission Distribution Fund. All the provinces that receive monies from the Mission Distribution Fund will be getting a letter from the Assistant General for the Missions.

International Missions. We began with the mission in **El Alto, Bolivia.** For the past 20 years, the Congregation of the Mission has been present in the mission in El Alto. There have been many changes. Lots of missionaries have come and gone. Today we have three missionaries there and we are asking for a fourth member from the Congregation of the Mission to volunteer to be part of this most important, and yet poor and difficult, mission, very much on the periphery, as Pope Francis would say. The language, obviously, is the local language of the people, plus Spanish. The Superior General shared with the Council his report on the visit he made to Bolivia. Both the community of El Alto and that of Cochabamba came together for Easter Week with the Superior General and celebrated their annual retreat. They also had the opportunity to meet as individual communities and individual confreres with the Superior General, as well as the two houses together throughout the course of the week.

We then had a long discussion on our mission in the **Solomon Islands**, which has been undergoing some radical changes in personnel, with the possible departure of four confreres at the end of this year. We received positive responses from several provinces for confreres to replace those who are leaving. We are most grateful for the assistance offered by the Province of Indonesia, as well as the Provinces of North and South India, and the support that we hope to continue to receive from the Province of Oceania. One of the confreres from the Province of Indonesia, who is returning to his home province, is Father Thomas Christiawan. We want to take this opportunity to thank Father Thomas for his years of contribution to the seminary apostolate in the Solomon Islands. As mentioned previously, Father Jose Manjaly, the mission superior, will be returning to his native Province of North India, sometime in November, to assume the role of Director of the Daughters of Charity.

We mentioned above that we named Father Marcos Gumieiro as superior of the mission in **Angola.** We learned that Father Roberto Perea, from the Province of Mexico, has returned to his home province after his request was considered and accepted by the Superior General.

Both the Superior General and Father Zonták, Assistant General, visited the missions of **Chad** and **Benin** a few months ago. We had a brief interchange on their impressions of both these missions. The mission in Benin is manned by three confreres from Poland. Father Lawrenz has returned to his Province of Poland, after having given a year of service to the mission for which we are most grateful.

The mission of **Punta Arenas** will now be expanded to include **Punta Arenas and Tierra del Fuego.** The team of three confreres presented the Community Project, which was approved by the Superior General and his Council. Plans were made for the visit of the Superior General to this international mission from 23 June until the end of the month.

Finally, we discussed the mission in **Alaska**, which now has a new superior. When Father Andy Bellisario arrives, he will join Deacon Arnoldo Hernandez of the Western Province and Father Pedro Delgado from the Province of Colombia. They are still awaiting the arrival of another confrere from Colombia, who is working on the difficult paperwork required to enter the United States. Father Bellisario has made a temporary visit to the mission and will be discussing further hopes and plans for the mission with the Archbishop of Anchorage.

We updated our list of volunteers and the times that they may be available to go to one of our international missions or to another mission or province of the Congregation that is in great need of personnel, such as Cuba and Mozambique. So before the Mission Appeal Letter in October, I put out this call again for any confrere who may be willing to work in the Province of Cuba or the Vice-Province of Mozambique.

We sent a letter to two volunteers, asking them to consider the possibility of one of the three missions that are in need of a missionary confrere. We are awaiting their replies. Another confrere-volunteer, who has been mentioned previously, is Father Ricardo Pradhan, from the Province of North India, who has generously offered to go to our mission in the Solomon Islands. He does so with the approval of his Visitor and Council. Father Antony Punnoth, from the Province of South India, has arrived there and has begun serving as a professor of philosophy, among other responsibilities. Another volunteer who has been working in our mission in the Solomon Islands, Father Teclmicael Tewolde from Eritrea, the Province of Saint Justin De Jacobis, will be transitioning from the Solomon Islands to the seminary under our responsibility in Papua New Guinea. In that transition period, Father Teclmicael will be taking a one-year course in seminary formation at the Gregorian University. He will live at the Leonine College with another confrere from the Papua New Guinea mission, Father Justin Eke, who is finishing his studies and will be returning to Papua New Guinea within a year.

Vincentian Family. We presented a number of candidates as International Moderator of AIC to replace Father Eli Chaves, who has served in this capacity for the last five years.

We received a report from the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change through its coordinator, Father Giuseppe Turati. He presented the Strategic Plan, as well as the visits planned for further implementing the systemic-change method in a number of provinces and countries where the Vincentian Family has requested this.

We also received and studied the report from the representative of the Congregation of the Mission on the Board of Depaul International, a Family branch member. This representative is Father Patrick Murphy, from the Western Province of the United States.

Conferences of Visitors. We then discussed the reports from the Conferences of Visitors. We received the minutes of the last General Assembly of **CEVIM (Conference of European Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission)**. We reviewed its Statutes and approved them with a slight modification of one part. In the report, we were informed that there is a new member on the coordinating team, Father Giuseppe Guerra, the Visitor of Naples. He will be succeeded by the future Visitor of the new Province of Italy. The President of CEVIM, Father Pavle Novak, was reelected for a second term. The Vice-President, whose term has not yet expired, is Father Ziad Haddad, Visitor of the Province of the Orient. CEVIM has also organized new formation team for the international seminary. The Director will be Father Guerra. He will be joined by Father Georges Maylaa, from the Province of the Orient, a former missionary in Papua New Guinea, and Father Antonio Ruiz García, from the Province of Madrid.

With regard to **CLAPVI (Conference of Latin American Vincentian Provinces)**, we received a report from CLAPVI-South and the Visitor of Chile, as well as a letter from the International Mission Team, composed of members of the Provinces of Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Ecuador. The new coordinator of this project is the Visitor of Ecuador, Father John Prager.

We received a report from the General Assembly of **COVIAM (Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar)**, which welcomed, for the first time, the superior of the mission of Chad. It had extended that invitation also to the other international missions in Africa, Angola and Benin, hoping for their participation in the future. Tunisia was present because the Executive Secretary of COVIAM is a member of the mission in Tunisia. COVIAM may come to a decision to establish a common formation program for theology. The proposed site is in Enugu, Nigeria. Their proposal was sent to the Superior General and his Council for consideration and recommendations.

Then we studied the minutes of the meeting of the **NCV (National Conference of Visitors of the United States)**, sent by its president, Father Raymond Van Dorpe. They speak of the preparation for the 200th anniversary celebration to mark the arrival of the Vincentians in the United States.

Council Calendars. The Superior General was in the International Mission in Punta Arenas and Tierra del Fuego, Chile from 23-29 June. From 2-5 July, he will be in the Region of Kenya, which belongs to the Western Province of the United States. From 6-10 July, he will be in Tanzania, participating in a Vincentian Family gathering and the ordination several members of the Province of South India, which is responsible for the mission in Tanzania. From 21 July and the week that follows, he will be in Salamanca for the General Assembly of the

Vincentian Marian Youth. He will be on vacation from 6 August to 4 September. From 5-6 September, he will be in Panama for a Vincentian Family gathering. From 13-17 September, he will participate in the meeting of superiors of International Missions and superiors of missions of provinces to be held at Via Ezio. On 18 September, he has a meeting, along with Father Heinen, with one of the agencies in Switzerland that supports our VSO projects and on the 19th they will participate in the CIF program on the Vincentian Family. From 20-25 September, he will be in Pallanza in Milan for the annual retreat of the members of the General Curia House. On the 26th, he will make a visit to Como, Italy, with the General Curia Community. On the 27th, there will be a meeting with the Vincentian Family in Milan and on the 28th, he will be in Naples for a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the province. On 29 September, also in Naples, he will be present for the opening of the Internal Seminary.

I close with a wonderful thought from our Holy Founder: "Oh! what great hidden treasures there are in holy Providence and how marvelously Our Lord is honored by those who follow it and do not try to get ahead of it" (CCD I, 60).

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General