

NOVEMBER – 2023

# NUNTIA



# SUMAMPA THE "PLACE" OF THE VIRGIN MARY



In 1630, in Sumampa, Santiago del Estero, Argentina, Antonio Farias de Saa had a deep Marian devotion. He felt that in those lands there should be an image of the Virgin Mary to accompany him and help gather the people in those unpopulated lands. He sent for two images from Brazil: one of the Immaculate Conception and the other of the Virgin of Consolation. The images landed in Buenos Aires in March 1630. Two ox-drawn carts took them to Cordoba. On reaching Luján, the cart carrying Our Lady of Luján stopped. The animals carrying it refused to follow the road. The image remained there, and the imposing basilica of the Virgin of Luján, patron saint of Argentina, was erected.



Without oxen to carry her, they used a mule to take the Virgin of Consolation to Santiago del Estero. The animal strayed when it touched the land of Sumampa Viejo. Miraculously, the mule arrived with the image safe and sound at the estancia of Don Antonio Farias Saa. They unloaded the figure and immediately built a chapel there, 3 kilometres from Sumampa.

Throughout the years the Virgin has bestowed protection and blessings. The titles that honour Our Mother are:

Patroness of the Carriers

Patroness of the People of Santiago del Estero

Patroness of the Culture of Santiago del Estero

Patroness of the Estancieros

Patroness of the rains

Protector of Motherhood and Childhood.

Such is the devotion of the faithful to this miraculous Virgin that her feast is celebrated every year in the month of November. More and more pilgrims offer their faith to the hopeful Virgin of Sumampa, mother of the humble and helpless, guardian of the dignity and honour of Argentina.

The pontifical coronation of the image of Our Lady of Consolation of Sumampa took place on 21 November 2009. The event took place in the National Historic Sanctuary.



The Eucharist was presided over by the apostolic nuncio in the country at the time, Mons. Adriano Bernardini, and concelebrated by the bishop of Santiago del Estero, Mons. Francisco Polti, and the auxiliary bishop, Mons.

The crown was made with material donated by the community of Sumampeña.

Thus, for 393 years, the people of Sumampa have been imploring the image of Our Lady of Consolation to take care of the wonderful gift of life of each member of the community, helping everyone to live the Christian faith with joy, faith and hope. It should be noted that since March 2022 the Vincentian Fathers, Missionaries of the Congregation of the mission are accompanying and animating the community Sumampa, great gift and task of being able to bring the announcement, with the joy of having experienced beautiful gestures of faith during the novena and the feast of our mother, the Virgin on 23 November.

From Sumampa, "el pago de la Virgen" (the Virgin's payment), may she shower her blessings on all the faithful devotees of the Mother of God.

**Rolando A. Vera CM**





# III CIF OF VINCENTIAN MISSIONARY FORMATION



From Sunday 5 November to Sunday 26 November 2023 the third CIF for missionaries of the Congregation of the Mission took place. It was held at the Mother House in Paris. Thanks to God and Mary, the participants were very happy with the outcome of this meeting. Taking up the evaluation made by the participants themselves, I would like to highlight what they liked the most. Above all, they appreciated the sharing among themselves. As there were many of them and from different places, cultures, ages and missionary methods, they were all very enriched. They also marvelled at the sight of the Vincentian places. It helped them to learn more about our identity and to renew their Vincentian vocation. Several of them were even touched by it. They also liked the lectures, although they pointed out several shortcomings among the lecturers, overall they liked them. They also felt that the prayer life was intense. I do not want to forget that they highlighted the openness of the Mother House towards them, first of all because of the attention of the superior of the house, Fr Roberto Gómez. Fr. Aarón and myself were very happy with the service provided.

Would you like to know the names of the participants? With pleasure, they are all priests of the Congregation of the Mission: Agapit Ebiagena, Alain Serge Ramarason, Arjan Ndoji, Augustin Boketa Ngambomo, César Adriano Jaime, Dionísio Samuel Samiha, Emmanuel Tutuwan, Ernesto Alfredo Zunguze, Henricus Susilo, Jacek Tendej, Jacob Nyeg, Jaime César Adriano, Joseph Biju Mundathanathu, Joseph Sheng-Jiao Lin, Joseph Vu Quoc Hung, Kenneth Sunday Eze, Kenty Abimelec Rosales Mira, Kim Tae Moon, Luis Ariel Ramirez, Munyao Dominic Makau, Nayak Binaya, Rony Kannanaikkal, Rowel Consolacion, Samuel Ngendakumana, Temelso Tesfaldet Berhe, Vincent Goguey and Antony Maria Cline. I would like to emphasise that they helped to make the CIF meeting a quality one. With them we organised working teams that allowed for a pleasant and efficient course.

Tomaz Mavric, as well as the visit of the Assistant General, Fr. Nelio Pita. Dear readers, I bid you farewell with a fraternal embrace. Let us continue to pray that the CIF will help to evangelise in each of its meetings.

**P. Andrés Motto, CM.**





# "THREE DAYS WITH MARIA" IN PUTIGNANO





The Italian national pilgrimage of the image of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal stopped in the diocese of Conversano-Monopoli, in Putignano (BA), from 26 to 29 November. On Monday 27 November, the liturgical feast of the Miraculous Medal, the Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the diocesan bishop, H.E. Monsignor Giuseppe Favale. As on several occasions in the past, it was a "city mission", hosted in the parish of Maria SS. del Carmine but in fact open and addressed to the whole of Putignano, as the parish priest Don Mimmo Belvito explained: "As the parish of Maria SS. del Carmine, together with the Vincentian Volunteers of Putignano, we decided to take this opportunity, at the end of the liturgical year, precisely in the days of the liturgical feast of 27 November. This initiative aims to be a light that is lit in our city to meet us under the mantle of the Mother so that she rekindles in us the faith in that God whose love for humanity is irrevocable".

The National Pilgrimage of the image of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, of which Putignano was one of the stops, began on 11 November 2020, at the Vatican, with the blessing of Pope Francis in commemoration of the 190th anniversary of the apparitions to St Catherine Labouré, and looks ahead to 27 November 2030, when the bicentenary will be celebrated.

Father Mario Sirica CM, member of the "Three Days with Mary" Commission and one of the animators of the mission, explains: "As in the last two missions, in Canicattì and Trapani, in Putignano there was a large participation of the faithful, not only people from the town that welcomed the statue of the Miraculous Medal, but also people from neighbouring towns". Father Mario continues: "As the Pope also asked us, our mission is directed not only to the community that welcomes the Madonna, but also to the most fragile among the last: in Putignano we experienced intense emotions when we went to visit a rest home, a rehabilitation centre, a rehabilitation centre for young drug addicts and alcoholics, and then also two centres for people with depression and psychiatric problems." Father Mario highlighted the reaction of the faithful, especially those who did not expect the statue of the Virgin Mary to visit them: "We visited seven facilities, I saw old people and young people who were moved by the statue of the Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal because it touched their hearts: they did not expect her to visit them. Our Lady is also there to encourage and console and to give hope to people who for so many reasons or when they are on the road to recovery want to throw in the towel or to the elderly who live the present with melancholy because they think of the past with anger".

Father Mario recalls in particular that, of the facilities visited, two were not planned: "We found ourselves in front of two unplanned facilities because we had gone in the wrong direction and so I told everyone present and the parish priest who accompanied us, Father Mimmo, that it was not by chance that we had stopped in front of these facilities because perhaps Our Lady was telling us that she wanted to go there too. And so it was... The first facility took in people with problems of depression, suicide attempts or other problems. The joy of the young guests and staff was so great that we took a desk that was in a basement, fixed it up as best we could, placed the statue on it and a beautiful spontaneous prayer was born from the young people asking us to pray for them, for their dead".

In the second centre where the visit was not planned, a very large rehabilitation centre also on the outskirts of Putignano, "one of the things that touched me was that one or more people who were in wheelchairs asked to pray, asked to pray and to pray for the sick who were in a worse state than they were", Father Mario comments, "even though their situation was not the best, in a wheelchair in a rehabilitation centre, these people also thought and asked to pray for those whose physical and health situation was worse than theirs".

Father Sirica elaborates on the meaning of the pilgrimage of the statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: "The mission "Three days with Mary" that we carry and live within the parish communities is an experience of grace. Although brief, it is an experience that touches the emotions of the people. It is an experience that is addressed to the parish community, which lives its daily or Sunday encounter with the Lord. It is a proposal that revives devotion to Mary through catechesis, the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual dialogues: when one reflects on Mary, everything leads to Jesus. It is also an experience of grace for the parish priests who call us. I have often seen the astonishment of parish priests at the large turnout for the "Three days with Mary" in these times when we read that attendance in our churches is very low".



The aim is to revitalise the community that attends the parish. When the opportunity arises to organise encounters with other peoples, the mission begins to make contact with more distant situations. The Vincentian missionaries who lead the mission adopt different approaches depending on the context in which they find themselves, as Father Mario points out: "It is not always possible with secondary school or high school children to start by talking about Mary. So we involve them by talking about charity, which is what young people think of a Church close to the poor. As Vincentians, we tell them about our experience in homes for the homeless, in hospitals, with HIV patients. We try to enter into relationship with young people by telling them about our experiences of charity and by dwelling on the difficulties and the potential we find in young people. In the Assisted Living Residences (RSA) we pray and meditate the Rosary, we reflect on the elderly and the wisdom of life". Father Mario concludes: "In general, we make this suggestion: give space to the people of the parish who live in material and spiritual poverty. That is why we ask that attention always be given to visits to the sick, to confession, to the RSA. Our attention is focused on a segment of the population living a particular moment of life or a delicate phase of growth, such as young people, people we cannot always reach".



# MARY'S LOVE CAN PROVIDE US WITH PROFOUND SPIRITUAL HEALING AND PHYSICAL RESTORATION



Mary's love can provide us with profound spiritual healing and physical restoration. The Basilica Shrine of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal recognized the power of this love through a nine-day Solemn Novena from November 13 through 21 during which hundreds of parishioners joined in prayer to our Blessed Mother, continuing a tradition unbroken for nearly 100 years.

On November 22, the Basilica Shrine celebrated the Solemnity of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Bishop David O'Connell, CM, Bishop of Trenton, New Jersey, served as principal celebrant of the Solemnity Mass.

"We come together today after this marvelous novena. We come together, joined by the same medal we all wear around our necks," Bishop O'Connell said.

Over more than nine decades, the Solemn Novena has become intrinsically linked to the Basilica Shrine and its enduring presence in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Fr. Joseph Skelly, CM, founder of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, stated in July 1931, "There is no force [as] mighty as that of thousands of united hearts, joined in faith and love, asking [for] Mary's intercession."

Implemented by Fr. Skelly, the Solemn Novena is celebrated annually for nine consecutive days leading up to the feast day of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. The Solemn Novena serves as a time for self-reflection, prayer, and meditation on a theme deeply rooted in our Catholic faith. The theme for 2023 was "Mary's Love."



Bishop O'Connell reflected on the occasions he has to stand in the very place where our Blessed Mother appeared to Saint Catherine Labouré, saying he is always overwhelmed by thinking of the Miraculous Medal and all the extraordinary graces given to us through Mary's intercession.

"Saint Catherine Labouré, a novice Daughter of Charity, could never have imagined what Mary's appearance to her in that chapel in Paris in 1830 would eventually mean to the entire world," Bishop O'Connell said. "But Mary did."

In the late 1920s and early '30s, Fr. Skelly introduced the Solemn Novena and weekly Perpetual Novena to honor Mary and increase devotion to her Miraculous Medal. Within several years, Perpetual Novena services were being held spread in more than 3,300 churches and chapels worldwide.

"Now we come together today at the conclusion of this marvelous novena. We come together, joined by the same medal we all wear around our necks – a truly miraculous medal," Bishop O'Connell said.

The Bishop noted that the Miraculous Medal provides stories and miracles "as different as each one of us here in this Basilica Shrine." Yet, he added, all the stories and miracles began in God and with our Mother's heart, love, and faith. He concluded his homily by requesting that in our prayers, works of charity, and life, we heed the words Mary gave to the servants of the wedding at Cana in Galilee: "Do whatever He tells you."







**ZIAD HADDAD, CM,  
COORDINATOR OF THE  
COMMISSION FOR  
FINANCIAL AUTONOMY  
OF PROVINCES**

Last October, the Superior General and his Council established a Commission for Financial Autonomy of Provinces. This Commission is tasked with supporting provinces facing financial problems by helping them become financially autonomous. The Commission consists of three members: Ziad Haddad as the Coordinator, Paul Parackal, General Econome, and Joel Bernardo, VSO Director.

The Commission has developed a detailed strategic plan to assist provinces dependent on the General Fund. The first step involves conducting a thorough financial diagnosis to understand the specific challenges of each province. Specific, clear, and realistic goals have been defined to guide the provinces towards financial autonomy. Effective resource management has been implemented, and assets have been identified to explore investment opportunities and bridge the income gaps.

Commitment to growth is at the core of the Commission's mission. The objective is to expand impact by seizing all opportunities. Transparency and accountability from the concerned provinces are essential, as the Commission seeks alternative sources and establishes income-generating projects and partnerships. It also explores grants and external funding to set new income standards. The Commission is committed to imparting financial management skills to each province through training and support.

A periodic review is conducted to assess the progress made, using measurable indicators to align with the Commission's objectives. Monitoring growth is crucial for achieving financial sustainability, regardless of the challenges faced.

The implementation of this plan will enable the Provinces of the Congregation of the Mission to become financially autonomous and reduce their dependence on the General Fund. It is important to note that this will require time and ongoing commitment from all parties involved, but the long-term benefits will be worth it



# FR. JAROSLAV JAŠŠO, CM JOINS VIMS TEAM



In response to the need for additional funds to advance the mission of the CM, Fr. Jaroslav Jaššo, C.M. is joining the team of Vincentian International Mission Services (VIMS). Fr. Jaroslav will remain a member of the Province of Madagascar while living at the CM Curia in Rome. He will work closely with Fr. Mark Pranaitis, C.M. the executive director of VIMS.

Fr. Jaroslav brings with him many years of ministry within the CM. Among other things, he has served in the Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the mission ad gentes in Honduras and Madagascar, been the Visitor of the Province of Slovakia, and served on many commissions and committees of the CM. He has a vast network of connections both inside and outside the CM.

VIMS is primarily focused on raising 30 million euro for the renovation of the Maison Mère in Paris so that it will be increasingly ready to serve the CM, the Vincentian Family, and other pilgrims who want to touch deeply the mission and legacy of St. Vincent de Paul.

Additionally, VIMS is raising 5 million euro for the “Seminary Project” which will help the Provinces of Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique, the Region of Rwanda-Burundi, and COVIAM complete or provide necessary repairs and updates to existing seminary buildings so that they can accept more applicants into their seminary programs. The growing number of vocations to the CM in Africa is a huge blessing. Accommodating that growth is the goal of the Seminary Project.

In addition, Fr. Jaroslav, will continue to support projects in the Province of Madagascar, especially through his summer preaching in Chicago parishes as part of that archdioceses’ Mission Co-op Program, something he has done for several years with great success.

VIMS is an independent not-for-profit organization (NGO) based in the USA. Under the guidance of a 5-person board of directors, it exclusively serves the CM, specifically projects approved by the Superior General to whom it reports. VIMS works cooperatively with the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO).



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LE DE LA REPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE A MADAGASCAR  
ATE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN MADAGASCAR



# BRIEF REPORT ON THE VISIT OF THE ASSISTANT GENERAL, REV. FR. GREGORIO BAÑAGA JR.



With great honour and joy, the North Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission warmly welcomed the Assistant General of the Congregation of the Mission, Rev. Fr. Gregorio Banaga Jr. on 30 October 2023, at the Provincial House, Vijoy Bhavan, Berhampur, Odisha, India.

Gregorio Banaga Jr. was given a formal and heartfelt reception in the presence of members of two canonical houses, namely Berhampur and Gopalpur. During the reception it was emphasized that his visit has a special significance as it is a rare occasion when an Assistant General visits India to meet the confreres. As part of the warm welcome, his agenda was presented to him, along with a comprehensive list of communities, houses and members. This information detailed the places he would visit during his stay. Mathew Nayak CM, volunteered to accompany him to all the places in Odisha and West Bengal, thus demonstrating a strong commitment to ensure a meaningful and impactful visit.





Gregorio Banaga Jr. showed great interest in interacting with all the members of the Odisha and West Bengal houses within a week's time. His aim was to actively listen to the confreres and get an insight into their individual ministries and tasks. In particular, he tried to understand the various types of ministry they were involved in within the different campuses. The Assistant General was really interested to know the challenges they faced and the opportunities they identified within their respective missions.

Fr. Gregorio Banaga Jr., Assistant General of the Congregation of the Mission, continued his journey with great enthusiasm. Sebastian Mali, CM, the Regional Superior, visited the Northeast Region on 8 November 2023 for a week-long visit, reaching out to the confreres in various canonical houses.

Their interactions were marked by fruitful exchanges, emphasising the unity and purpose of the mission of the Congregation. Venturing further into Manipur, Rev. Fr. Banaga delved into the complex challenges arising from the ongoing ethnic violence and attacks on minority communities. His visit was not merely symbolic, but a genuine effort to understand the multifaceted problems affecting the region.





Departing from the North Indian Province on 16 November 2023, Rev. Fr. Banaga concluded his impressive two-week visit, marking a significant chapter in the shared journey of the Congregation. Throughout his travels, he expressed his sincere joy and appreciation for the dedication and missionary work witnessed among the various confreres. The Assistant General, echoing the sentiment of Philippians 1: 3, rejoiced in the collaborative efforts, stating, "I thank my God in all things that I remember you".

Gregorio Banaga Jr. left behind not only the echo of his words but a lasting impact, exemplifying the Congregation's dedication to understanding, compassion and the pursuit of a shared mission. The lasting influence of his visit reflects the Congregation's commitment to nurturing meaningful connections and fostering a sense of shared purpose and mission that extends beyond specific boundaries. The profound impact resonates in the collective growth and shared efforts that characterise the essence of the Congregation's ongoing journey.



# THE VISIT OF THE VICAR GENERAL OF CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION TO THE SOUTHERN INDIAN PROVINCE



Rev. Fr. Gregorio Bañaga, the Vicar General of Congregation of the Mission made a friendly visit to Southern Indian Province (SIP) from 16th to 24th November 2023. He arrived at Bangalore after his visit to the North Indian Province (NIP) and the North-Eastern Region of the NIP. Rev.Fr.Anil Thomas, the Visitor of Southern Indian Province received Fr. Bañaga and accompanied him during the visit. On the 16th evening, Fr. Bañaga visited the Provincial House of Daughters of Charity and interacted with the Sisters, before he proceeded to Mysore on the following day morning.

On the evening of 17th November, Fr. Bañaga presided over the concluding Eucharistic celebration of the annual retreat of confreres. In a brief function, Fr. Bañaga was accorded an official welcome with the traditional attire and gave a conference to the confreres. Thereafter, he interacted with the confreres in smaller groups before the dinner in honor of him.

On 18th November, Fr. Bañaga concelebrated the Eucharist with the confreres and students in the De Paul Belagola Community and addressed the confreres thereafter, inviting them to instill the Christian and Vincentian Values among collaborators and students. After the breakfast, the students and staff members of De Paul International Residential School and De Paul Degree College extended a warm welcome to Fr. Bañaga. In his address, he enlightened them about the necessity of chasing their dreams and aspirations without forgetting to nurture a value-based academic and professional life. A brief interactive session with staff members where he shared his insights on education ministry gained through his experience as a professor and administrator at Adamson University, Manila. After a brief tour through the campus, Fr. Bañaga proceeded to the Seminary community of the Daughters of Charity, at Belagola. In the afternoon, he toured around Mysore, visiting significant historical places.



On the 19th morning, Fr. Bañaga celebrated Mission Sunday Eucharist with the Minor Seminary Community and exhorted them to nurture their Vincentian vocation and zeal for Vincentian mission around the world. He inaugurated the Mission Sunday fundraising fair. In the evening Fr. Bañaga flew down to Chennai, Tamilnadu to visit the confreres. On the following day, he addressed the staff and students of St. Vincent's Matriculation School and interacted with the confreres. In the evening he flew down to Cochin, Kerala, and stayed in St. Vincent's Mission House, a theology study house. On the 21st morning, he celebrated the Eucharist with the community and shared some practical insights on formation and the Vincentian Ministry. After interacting with the confreres, he proceeded to Vincentian Sadan, the residence of senior confreres. He spent quality time with elderly Vincentian missionaries and retired from active ministry.





On 22nd November, he traveled to Idukki, Kerala, to visit De Paul International Residential School, Kerala, and a community at Erattayar, in Syro-Malabar rite. The journey was long and tiring. Fr. Bañaga said, "In India, I have spent more time on the road than interacting with confreres". On the following day, he addressed the Regional unit of the Vincentian Family in Kerala and enlightened them about the necessity of nurturing a Vincentian Spirituality based on contemplation in action. In the evening, he interacted with the Provincial Council and shared his observations and insights towards the integral welfare of the Province, the confreres, and various Vincentian ministries.

Before travelling to Rome, Fr. Bañaga made a short visit to the Daughters of Charity community at Muringoor and the various Vincentian ministries of Vincentian Fathers (VC) at Divine Retreat Center.

**Fr. Sebastian Vettickal C.M.**

## NOMINATIONES

BARBOSA DE OLIVEIRA Vandeir	15/11/2023	Visitor Brazil - Río de Janeiro
NAKAD Antoine Pierre	30/11/2023	Director DC Proche-Orient (Reconfirmed)
REYES SÁNCHEZ Max Eduardo	30/11/2023	Visitor Ecuador (Reconfirmed)
SANTOS NÚÑEZ José Israel	30/11/2023	Visitor Puerto Rico (Reconfirmed)

## ORDINATIONES

NHOMKUÉ Daniel Alberto	Sac	MOZ	25/11/2023
PAULO RAUL Faustino	Sac	MOZ	25/11/2023
VACHEQUE Sérgio Francisco	Sac	MOZ	25/11/2023
ALFREDO POA Antonius	Sac	IDS	27/11/2023
ANDRIANTO Yusep	Sac	IDS	27/11/2023

## MOVEMENTS



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