

Rome, 24 June 2006
Birth of St. John the Baptist

To all the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Brothers,

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

Please consider this to be the official invitation to participate in the Visitors' Meeting in Mexico City in June 2007. The theme of the meeting will be: "Ongoing Formation for a Vincentian Missionary Today."

Attached you will find a letter from the Preparatory Commission, with some of the initial details for that gathering. So that the meeting itself can be well-prepared and successful in its execution, I ask you to collaborate in every way possible in responding to the questions that the Preparatory Commission has prepared for your consideration.

The objects of the gathering are the following:

1. To strengthen and celebrate the unity of the whole Congregation with its diverse provinces through the Eucharist, common prayer and shared experiences;
2. To share with one another the life-giving events of our continuously changing world and how we should respond to them, as missionaries, in the steps of Jesus, Evangelizer of the poor;
3. To study together, as Visitors, how to foster and accompany the continuing growth of our confreres with the proper ongoing formation;
4. To exercise co-responsibility for the life of the Congregation, offering suggestions about various topics proposed by the Superior General and his council;
5. To provide time for the annual meeting of the various continental Conferences.

The meeting itself will have a variety of different activities. First of all, there will be the development of the theme through two presentations. One will deal with the topic of ongoing formation for the Vincentian missionary today in a general way. The second presentation will deal with different levels of ongoing formation, that might be beneficial for the growth of each age grouping of confreres.

In the middle of the meeting, we will have the opportunity to gather in prayer with a retreat morning. There will be lots of time for recreation among ourselves, as well as some excursions in and around Mexico City.

There will also be time to treat other business matters in regard to the ongoing life of the Congregation of the Mission; such as, a follow-up on some of the postulata from the 2004 General Assembly and presentations given by some of those responsible for the different services that the Congregation provides. There will be ample opportunity to dialogue with the Superior General and his council, both in a large-group gathering, as well as individually.

Members of the Preparatory Commission themselves will be the different facilitators of each day's activities. Beforehand you will be receiving materials to help you prepare for the event itself. Among these materials will be various excerpts from documents from the Congregation of the Mission, as well as materials dealing with Vincentian ongoing formation and some material from the Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, which deals specifically with the topic.

To help facilitate our work and to give us feedback about what is being said, we will have two synthesizers from the beginning to the end of the gathering. They will listen to our conversations and discussions and then they will report back to us what they have heard to help us see where we are going.

I am certainly looking forward to having the opportunity to be with all of you so that, together, we might deepen our commitment to following Jesus Christ, evangelizing the poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

Preparatory Commission for the Visitors' Meeting

Rome, 24 June 2006

To all the Visitors in the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Visitors,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

We, the members of the Preparatory Commission for the Visitors' meeting scheduled for June 2007 in Mexico City, met for the first time at the General Curia in Rome on 12-16 June 2006 and began its work. Our task is to prepare in the most creative way possible the forthcoming Visitors' Meeting in Mexico City with the theme: Ongoing Formation for a Vincentian Missionary Today.

After having dialogued and reflected in detail, the Commission decided to contact you immediately with some information and also some questions, which will help the Commission to continue its work.

As you already know, we expect you to arrive in Mexico City on 3 June 2007 and plan to depart on 16 June. If you wish to arrive before 3 June or depart after 16 June, you have to make your own arrangements. The Technical Commission for this meeting will contact you in due time with regard to other details like visas, airport pick up, weather, lodging, etc. But now, to help us move forward, we request that you reflect on and answer the following questions and return your responses to this Commission **by 31 October 2006**, at the following address: cmcuria@tin.it

1. How is the ongoing formation organized in your province?
 - a) Do you have a commission for this?
 - b) What are its objectives?
 - c) What are its activities in the past five years?
2. What is your opinion about the ongoing formation of the confreres in your province?
 - a) How have you taken into consideration issues arising from human conditions such as age, psychological maturity, stages of life, etc, in setting up the ongoing formation programs for your confreres?
 - b) Have you taken into consideration also the external conditions (assignments, pastoral environment, changing political and economic situations, etc.)?

- c) What have you found most challenging in fostering the ongoing formation of your confreres?
3. Which institutions in your country or region that have been helpful in providing ongoing formation for your confreres?
4. Have your confreres benefited from the services offered by the CM such as CIF, SIEV, Delegate for the Vincentian Family, International Missions, etc, for their ongoing formation?
5. What suggestions do you have for the ongoing formation in the CM?

Confident that our services might be useful to you and the entire Congregation, we remain, your devoted confreres,

Daniel BORLIK,
Antonius SAD BUDIANTO, Francisco SOLÁS SÁNCHEZ,
Yves BOUCHET, Michael NGOKA