

Rome, 19 December 2006

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission*

*The angel said to them: "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10).*

***Tempo Forte (4-8 December) Circular***

Dear Brothers,

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

The Superior General and council met from 4-8 December 2006 for their *tempo forte* session. The special session for ongoing formation was entitled: "Islam and the Poor and Poverty, A Theological Challenge." The presenter was Ahmet Eren Kademoğlu, a Muslim Theologian.

Also present at our *tempo forte* meeting was the Preparatory Commission for the International Meeting of Visitors in Mexico, as well as Father Carl Pieber of the International Development Office.

1. The **International Meeting of Visitors** will be held from 4-16 June 2007 in Mexico. The first part of the meeting will be a session dealing with ongoing formation for the Vincentian missionary today, concerning specifically young, middle-aged and older confreres. The second week will deal with different items on the Superior General's agenda, with live or written reports on the various services to the Congregation from the General Curia. Among the live reports will be the CIF program, the SIEV (International Secretariat for Vincentian Studies), the VSO (Vincentian Solidarity Office), the IDO (International Development Office), *Vincentiana* and the Vincentian Family. Among the written reports will be the NGO at the United Nations, the website, the History Project, the Think Tank Commission, as well as the reports from the Postulator and Procurator of the Congregation of the Mission. Hopefully, in dialogue among the Visitors, we will also be able to come up with some possible ideas for the 2010 General Assembly.
2. We discussed the final details for the upcoming **Workshop for Confreres in Difficulty**, which will be held in Rome from 10-16 January.

3. We decided to contract a consultant to help us in our study of the **General Archives**, as well as the library materials, here in the Curia.
4. As you may or may not know, we have been doing a changeover in our **database in the General Secretariat** for the past several months. This is a major project. We are in its final stages. We are making every effort possible to get the *Catalogue* out. With the work that has been done on the database, renewing the *Catalogue* will be much simpler in the years to come. Our hope is that it will be out at the beginning of each year. Also, as some of you may know, we have been having major difficulties with our **Internet Server**. A lot of incoming and outgoing mail has been lost in cyberspace. We made a decision to change the server. **The new address for the General Curia is:** [cmcuria@cmglobal.org](mailto:cmcuria@cmglobal.org)
5. We are looking for a new **coadjutor brother for the Curia**, who will be replacing Brother Adam Budzyna, who has served in the Curia for seven years and who will be moving on to another project at the service of the International Congregation. This will be announced at a later date. The transition from one brother to the other will probably take place sometime in the spring of 2007.
6. In discussing the **financial matters** of the General Curia, we studied and approved the budgets of the Curia Offices that are at the service of the international Congregation, as well as the budgets of our international missions.
7. This year we received 18 projects for the **Systemic Change Award for 2007**, some of which we asked to have sent for the Mission Award, instead of the Systemic Change Award. Others we have encouraged to renew their project and send it again at a later date. We chose three winners, which will be announced on 25 January 2007.
8. The Superior General and his council have named Father Carl Pieber as the **Director of the International Development Office** of the Congregation of the Mission. The Director's term of office is *ad nutum*. He will be directly accountable to the Superior General with his council, meeting with them twice a year in Rome during the *tempo forte* sessions of June and December. Carl will remain a juridical member of the Province of Philadelphia and his office will be located in the same building from which Brother Peter Campbell operates the Vincentian Solidarity Office. We are grateful to Carl for his acceptance of this responsibility in helping us to meet the ever-growing demands and needs of our poorer provinces and for other projects that are presented to the Superior General and his council for their attention. I also thank Father Thomas

McKenna, the Visitor of Philadelphia, for his generosity in allowing Father Pieber to serve in this capacity, beginning on a part-time basis.

9. We studied the report of the **NGO representative at the United Nations**. Among other workshops that Joe Foley, our UN representative, attended in October and November were some of the following: Empowering the Poor to End Poverty in Least Developed Countries, Developing a Human-Rights-Based Approach to Overcoming Poverty, Human Rights of Migrants, and Violence Against Children. Joe will be participating in five NGO committees this year: 1) the Poverty Eradication Subcommittee, 2) the Social Development Committee, 3) the Israel-Palestine Working Group, 4) the NGO Committee on International Migration, and 5) the Ecumenical Working Group. With regard to the worldwide situation of migrants, officially there were 191 million migrants in the world in 2005. Considered from the point of view of their countries of origin, migration is largely driven by poverty, violence and social instability. Considered from the point of view of countries of destination, migrants find themselves without rights, protection or services; often abused and trafficked. Fifty-one percent of migrants are women and half of all migrants are children. At a going-away party organized by the NGOs for Kofi Annan, during his sharing he named several successes that he attributed to the NGOs involvement.
10. We received a report from Hugh O'Donnell and Juan Julián Díaz Catalán of the **CIF Program**. In his evaluation of the program, Juan Julián states: "During my time in the CIF Program it has been proven that the program has been the cause of personal renewal of the confreres, works toward the unity of the Congregation of the Mission and a greater consciousness of its internationality." He states that the confreres renew themselves profoundly according to our charism. They sense being one body, in spite of the fact that they live in different countries. They experience, in a very live way, the internationality of the Congregation. The overall difficulty that was highlighted in the report is that the program is dedicated to confreres who are not completely free to decide their participation. Those who decide are the Visitors and many times it is difficult for a Visitor to free a confrere.

Hugh O'Donnell commented on the Servant-Leadership Workshop, saying that we have a winner in this program. They hope to be able to plan another for the future in the other official languages of the Congregation. Hugh will be addressing the question of ongoing formation during the Visitors' Meeting in

June. He will be the main speaker for the ongoing formation segment of that meeting.

11. In the report from the **webmaster**, John Freund notes that we were recently favored with a very laudatory mention on CathNews: "This website from the Vincentian Family is one of the more active Catholic projects online. It aims to create an encyclopedia and dictionary of all things Vincentian." This is a comment made concerning the Vincentian Encyclopedia, which has been developed both in English and Spanish, as well as some work in German and discussions about a possible Polish version. Father Freund's assistant, Sister Gail, is working on a series of presentations that will make significant documents more readily available to a wider audience. She is also working on developing an online presentation of the *Guide for the Local Superior*, incorporating various adult learning styles. This project could be easily translated into various languages and be a useful tool for all the provinces.
12. We wish to announce publicly that Father Julio Suescun, the person responsible for the Spanish-language website of the Vincentian Family, has been named **Editor of *Vincentiana*** and **Executive Secretary for the programs developed by the International Secretariat of Vincentian Studies**. Julio will arrive in the Curia at the beginning of the new year. As you may know, Julio is replacing Father Alfredo Becerra in this responsibility. The latter has become the new archivist, librarian and assistant superior of the General Curia. I want to thank both Julio and Alfredo for their generous service.
13. We received a report from the **Delegate of the Superior General to the Vincentian Family**, Father Manuel Ginete. Among his most recent activities was participation in the meeting of the Vincentian Family of Central America in León, Nicaragua in October, a day of recollection for the Vincentian Family of Thailand in Bangkok in November and a session at the CIF Program in Paris at the end of November and beginning of December. At the same time, Sister María Pilar López, who also works in the Office for the Vincentian Family, participated in the Latin American Youth Pastoral Meeting in Caracas, Venezuela in October. Presently the members of the Office of the Vincentian Family, together with the Superior General, are working on the tentative agenda for the upcoming annual meeting of the international heads of some branches of the Vincentian Family, which will take place from 2-4 February 2007 in Casa Maria Immacolata in Rome. The Strategic Five-Year Plan: 2005-2010 of the Delegate for the Vincentian Family was studied.

14. The **International Mission in the Solomon Islands** will be initiating, in 2007, a formation program for candidates for the Congregation of the Mission. The overall responsibility of this formation program will fall on the Province of Australia.
15. Our two newest missionaries to the **International Mission in El Alto, Bolivia**, Fathers Fernando Sánchez and Cyrille de Nanteuil finished up a two-month program of animation and renewal for missionaries. A more detailed evaluation of the program is being put together by the Assistant for Missions, Father José Antonio Ubillús.
16. We received a petition from the Regional Superior of the Daughters of Charity in **Albania-Kosovo** for a confrere to assist in the spiritual animation of the sisters. We are in the process of naming a subdirector for the Daughters of Charity there, who are members of the Province of Slovenia.
17. We studied the offers of 12 **volunteers for the missions ad gentes**. Hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, two or three of them will be placed, while others have been asked to mature their requests for a couple of years. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the members of the Congregation of the Mission who, in one way or another are exercising their ministry in mission territories, whether they be international missions, sponsored by the General Curia, or missions that are sponsored by different provinces or vice-provinces of the Congregation of the Mission.
18. The Superior General has named Father Pedro Castillo for another three-year period as **Subdirector of the JMV International Council and Director of the JMV International Secretariat**. I want to thank Pedro for his generous service, which he has carried on in recent years. May God give him the energy to follow through in this responsibility for another three years. I am also grateful to the Visitor and Province of Venezuela for their generosity in permitting this young member of their province to serve the international Congregation by serving the Vincentian Marian Youth.
19. At the last Assembly of the **Union of Superiors General**, I was elected to the Executive Council, representing Societies of Apostolic Life. My responsibilities will entail another series of meetings, around the same dates as the biannual meeting of the Union of Superiors General. At the same time, I will be coordinating the meeting of the members of the Societies of Apostolic Life, which is held prior to the Assembly of the Union of Superiors General.
20. The Assistants and myself are continually updating our calendars, planning **visits and canonical visitations** of the

different provinces of the Congregation of the Mission. As you can imagine, it is not an easy task to schedule visits or canonical visitations for the number of provinces that we have in the Congregation. I ask the Visitors for their collaboration in the planning of these visits, above all with the Assistants, who are mainly responsible for the canonical visits. I also ask the openness of the other members of the provinces by their participation in these visits so that we, as a General Council, might have a truer sense of the Congregation of the Mission and its needs and, therefore, determine how we can best respond in our role as animators.

I take this opportunity to offer all you a Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with passion for Christ and passion for humanity, especially for the poor.

*For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful from David's throne and over his kingdom (Isaiah 9:5-6a).*

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General