

FEATURE:

Helping the Missionaries to Be Faithful, in All Seasons

Presentation

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Half a year after it took place, *Vincentiana* publishes in print the contents of the Meeting-Workshop about helping confreres in difficulty. The delay in publishing is due to the changes that have taken place in the Curia and to the change in the editor of this magazine. We now present this double issue corresponding to January/February and March/April 2007.

The title does not pretend to be just a pious rendering of the rough expression "confreres in difficulty." It is true that in the very same days of the Meeting-Workshop some voices arose asking that the expression be changed. The Superior General himself, in the closing homily made a reference to that problem, and added that "Yet I think it reflects the reality in which we are living." Nevertheless, the Meeting-Workshop had been planned to help all of us extend a helping hand to those missionaries in especially difficult circumstances. The message was not meant precisely only for the confreres with problems, but for the whole Congregation; the intention was to encourage all of us to face the situation. The meeting then was meant to be of help to all missionaries so as to be faithful to what God demands of them at this moment, both in giving a helping hand to those in especially difficult circumstances, and in

trying to solve the personal difficult situation with the help offered by the Congregation. It is a question then of helping all of us to be faithful. On the other hand, if we take into account the effort necessary to grow in maturity as regards one's personal vocation and the transformation and conversion demanded by our being conformed to the model of Christ, who would dare think to be free from problems and difficulties?

We have followed a logical order in the presentation of the themes. In the first place we present the changes that have taken place in the manner of looking at this problem in the last years, as presented in the introductory experiences. We admit with all sincerity how this reality is affecting our Congregation. We go on exposing the important means that we have to help support our fidelity to our vocation. Then we present the difficult situations which we might have to face.¹ And finally we consider the means offered to us in order to overcome a given difficult situation or to go on being faithful to what the Lord expects from us in the given moment, never forgetting the impact that those situations, which are particularly difficult have on the lives of the missionaries and of their communities. Because there is nothing new under the sun, we have added, to the themes studied in the Meeting-Workshop, an article by Father Vicente de Dios about the help Saint Vincent gave to the missionaries when they found it difficult to be faithful to their vocation.

Among the great helps we have to strengthen the fidelity to our vocation we should no doubt count the process of Ongoing Formation, a point which was solidly exposed at length by Cyril de Souza, S.D.B. *Vincentiana* has decided to publish this exposition in its next issue dedicated to the Visitors' Meeting in Mexico, which was centered precisely on the topic of Ongoing Formation.

Vincentiana will thus become a reminder for those who took part in the meeting to help the fidelity of our confreres towards God, as well as an echo full of lessons to all of us who did not have the fortune of being present at the meeting.

The reader should be aware that the articles were done more for a spoken than for a written presentation. Nothing will take the place of the vividness of the oral presentation. Besides, the written version offered here will probably have an added roughness due to the translation.

(JAIME CORERA ANDÍA, C.M., translator)

¹ These are indicated in the *Practical Guide for the Visitor*.