

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR

(13-18 June 2008)

Rome, 26 June 2008

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Brothers,

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

On 13-19 June the General Council and I met for our second *tempo forte* of this year. I have included some of the more significant matters that we discussed in that meeting.

1. Father Dan Borlik and Father Manny Ginete presented the **final report of the Task Force on Ongoing Formation**. The Council and I have made a decision to publish that report together with the letter of the Superior General that was written after the Visitors' Meeting in Mexico. It is our hope that this material will help to encourage the provinces to create or to improve upon existing programs of permanent formation. The publication, too, will be a significant piece of information to be used in preparation for the General Assembly 2010.
2. The General Council and I met with the members of the **Preparatory Commission for the General Assembly 2010**. After a week of much work they have prepared a packet that will be sent to the Visitors to assist in the development of the Domestic and Provincial Assemblies.
3. We had a report from Father Jozef Kapusciak, the Coordinator of the Executive Committee for the **celebration of the anniversaries of the deaths of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac**. Subcommissions are being established in order to assure the good execution of this celebration. As stated previously, Father Kapusciak is assisted by Father Manuel Ginete and Sister Palmarita Guida. There are five committees that will help to develop the celebration: Heritage, Celebration, Financial, Projects and Secretariat. It is our hope that on 15 March we will be able to celebrate the anniversary of St. Louise in Paris, France and on 27 September also in 2010, the anniversary of St. Vincent de Paul in Rome, Italy. You will be receiving periodic information from the Executive Committee.

4. **New members of the Curia** will be arriving in September. Father Mario Grossi from the Province of Turin will act as administrator of the house, assuming the role of Superior and local econome. Brother Milton de Jesus Pereira, of the Province of Rio de Janeiro, and Father Luis Antonio Molerés of the Province of Saragoza, who will be secretary and translator.
5. The Vincentian Institute of DePaul University will undertake a project of digital reproduction of the publications of the General Curia.
6. We received a report from Father Giuseppe Guerra relating to his roles as **Procurator and Postulator General**. Most likely our next beatification will be that of the venerable Father Salvatore Micalizzi of Naples some time during 2009. I encourage you check out the website of the Postulator General www.vincenziani.com/santi.htm.
7. We treated economic questions beginning with the **Mission Award**. Eight projects were submitted and we selected five. On the feast of St. Justin de Jacobis the projects which have won will be announced with a brief write-up on each.
 Included in the economic report was also the distribution of the Mission Fund for 2009. From the **Mission Distribution Fund** we are able to help requests from the CM bishops working in Mission territories. Money was distributed to our three international missions of El Alto, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. We also distributed funds to help run the Vincentian Conferences of APVC, CLAPVI and COVIAM. We were able to assist with funds 24 Provinces or Regions of Provinces who without this help would not be able to carry out their missions.
 Father Gouldrick also shared with us a summary of the meeting of the Curia **Financial Committee** that held their meeting 19-20 May. The members of that Committee are Bernard Meade, Province of Ireland; Philippe Lamblin, Province of Paris; Tom Stehlik, Province of US South; Santiago Ascarate, Province of Saragoza; and Mr. Tom Beck, Province of US Midwest.
8. We received the quarterly report from Brother Peter Campbell, the Director of the **Vincentian Solidarity Office**. Since the last *tempo forte* meeting they have accepted four new Vincentian Solidarity Office projects and they were able to fund seven Vincentian Solidarity Fund micro-project grants. Peter also included an update on the merger of the International Development Office with the VSO, having had a number of

meetings with key people in order to prepare a report for the Superior General in the *tempo forte* meeting in October. For the different activities of the Vincentian Solidarity Office, you can check out their website at www.famvin.org/vso.

9. There were several reports on the **Vincentian Family**. The Superior General has accepted the resignation of Father Benjamin Romo, coordinator of the AMM International. Father Benjamin has a new assignment in the Province of Mexico among some of the poorest of our brothers and sisters, making the fulfillment of his responsibilities at the international level of the AMM quite impossible. As Superior General and Director General of the Association of the Miraculous Medal, I want to thank Father Romo for his generous years of service, not only as coordinator but as one of the main promoters of the development of the AMM at the international level. We have initiated a process for selecting a new coordinator. This branch of our family is celebrating its jubilee year from July 8, 2008 through November 20, 2009.

We received a report from Father Manny Ginete, delegate for the Vincentian Family. Father Ginete reported on the Vincentian Family Gathering that was held in New Orleans in April as well as his visit to the Vincentian Family in Taiwan in May. Manny also participated in the forums of summer formation programs organized by the presidents of three schools in the Philippines at Adams University in Manila, Sacred Heart College of the Daughters of Charity in Lucena City, and the University of Santa Isabel of the Daughters of Charity in Naga City. Father Ginete also gave a talk to the OMI sessions for lay partners held here in Rome in June sharing with them some of our experience in working with the laity in the Vincentian Family. He gave a brief report on the meeting of the executive coordinators of the 350th anniversary of the deaths of St. Louise and St. Vincent.

Father Ginete's visits until the end of 2008, among other places, will be to the Vincentian Youth Gathering and the World Youth Day taking place in Australia. While conducting a retreat for the CMs in Kenya he will also visit the Vincentian Family there in August. He will make a visit to the Vincentian Family in Peru in September as well as to the Vincentian Family in Poland the same month. Sister Maria Pilar, the Executive Secretary of the Vincentian Family office will participate in the Vincentian Family Central America meeting in Honduras in October. Through the work of Father Ginete, we, the members of the General Council, and myself as Superior General, are continually trying to

encourage the members of the Congregation of the Mission to fulfill our responsibility in accompanying our lay brothers and sisters. One comment from a confrere that Father Ginete heard along the way was very telling: "When the lay Vincentians get into the act, things really begin to happen." Let us all work together with the poor so as to continue to give honor and glory to our God in the Vincentian fashion.

10. We received a report from the coordinator of the **Committee for Promoting Systemic Change**, Father Robert Maloney. The biggest news piece is that we hope that the book *Seeds of Hope: Stories of Systemic Change* will be published in both English and Spanish in time for the feast of St. Vincent de Paul. In preparation for that celebration, we continue to be encouraged to use the five simple processes that were developed to help us understand the spirituality of systemic change. The materials are readily available on the famvin website.
11. From the Directors of the **CIF program**, Father Hugh O'Donnell, Father Juan Julian Catalan and Father Jose Carlos Fonsatti, we received an evaluation of the Vincentian Heritage program that was held in April and May. The report was very positive and for the first time in the history of the program three lay members of the Vincentian Family participated: Bill and Mary Jaster who are coordinators of the Denver Vincentian Volunteers, and Mary O'Broin who is the coordinator of the popular mission teams for Ireland. Our hope in the future is to continue to invite select members of our lay branches to participate in these Vincentian Heritage programs, although our main focus will continue to be the Congregation of the Mission. The interchange between the confreres and the laity in this past experience was rated very positively. CIF is in the final preparation of the Servant Leadership workshop in June and July; and at this date 35 participants are signed up. We also worked out the details of a workshop for Brothers in the Congregation of the Mission which will be developed and held in the Center for International Formation sometime in the near future.
12. We received a report from the **Director of Communications** for the Congregation of the Mission, Father Julio Suescun giving us an update on Nuncia, Vincentiana, the famvin and cmglobal websites. Father Suescun is grateful to a number of the confreres who support his work through their translation capabilities. Because translation is one of our most difficult roles to fulfill, we ask confreres who have the possibilities of doing translation, please to contact us at the General Curia.

13. We received a report from Father Joe Foley, our **NGO representative to the United Nations**. Joe began his report with a quote, “The Lord’s Prayer highlights that having enough to eat is, and has always been, central to the Christian idea of a world shaped by justice and mercy. If God’s will was done, no one would go hungry.” taken from Sushant Agrawal, Director of the Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action in India. Joe’s report highlighted some reflections on the Vatican Forum on Catholic-inspired NGOs that was held in November 2007 in Rome as well as his work in the planning Committee for the Paris Conference on Reaffirming Human Rights, the Universal Declaration at 60. Joe joined this planning group to facilitate the desires of the Brothers of Charity who want to speak to mental health as a human right issue. Joe also reported on the food and agricultural conference that was held in Rome on the theme of hunger and the upcoming migration conference in Manila. I would like to take a quote from Joe’s conclusion; he says that “the more I get to know our community, the more proud I am of who we are and what we do. I see us doing many of things that the social teaching is pointing to, with faith and courage. However I often think that this social dimension of the gospel is not sufficiently explicit in our formation and ongoing formation processes.” Take these closing lines of Joe as a way of encouraging ourselves to be evermore attentive to the signs of the times and responding to them as our charism indicates.
14. Among other things, John Freund report on the famvin website states that Vincentian-related videos found on youtube, whether created by famvin or others, are being consolidating, into a new channel <http://www.youtube.com/famvinglobal>. As an aid to promoting awareness of significant events, famvin English has added an interactive calendar that allows all to post notices of their upcoming regional or international activities. [http://famvin.org/wiki/VincentWiki:Current events](http://famvin.org/wiki/VincentWiki:Current%20events). The news portion of the famvin site in English continues popularizing systemic change with the recent second series of 20 articles from the Commission on Promoting Systemic Change. We have expressed our concern that while the English site is well developed, many of the materials are unable to be utilized by the Spanish and French websites. The major problem there is no access to a team of translators, a story that we have heard often and lament, but at this point in time, there is little that we can do to change that reality.

The different reports that come in from each of the **Conferences of Visitors** were distributed to the members of the Council and

made available for further comment. Our first point of business was the desire to have a follow-up meeting with the Presidents of the conferences which we will be able to realize some time next year.

15. From the Conference of Visitors of **CEVIM** we received their final document of a meeting that was held in Rome for formators. One of their recommendations is that it is time to begin the revision of our two Ratios, of the Internal Seminary and the Major Seminary. Another point that was highlighted was the importance of learning other languages, among other reasons to help promote interprovincial collaboration. We also received the minutes of the Conference of Visitors that was held in Krakow in April which the General Assistant, José María Nieto attended. One of the translators was Father Claudio Santangelo, Secretary General. Two of the more important needs of Europe is the call to support the Vice-Province of Saints Cyril and Methodius and the sustaining of the mission of Albania. The Provinces of CEVIM would also like to continue reflection on the theme of how to have a more active missionary presence in Turkey, Romania and Greece. CEVIM, in this session, elected a new leadership for the next three year: President, Brian Moore of the Province of Ireland, Vice President Father Nicola Albanesi of the Province of Rome, and Father Antoine Nakad of the Province of the Orient as a member of the permanent council until the next conference meeting which will be held, God willing, in April 2008 in Beirut, Lebanon.

From **CLAPVI** we received a working document which was a follow-up to the Brothers' meeting in Santo Domingo in October 2007. CLAPVI's next General Assembly will be held in Argentina from 16-22 October 2008. The Province of Argentine will be celebrating the opening of its jubilee on the occasion of their 150 years presence in Argentine, Paraguay and Uruguay.

The Superior General and his Council have approved a nomination of Father Andy Bellisario as president of the **NCV** for an additional one-year term.

At this time, the Superior General and his Council continue to support the movement toward the reconfiguration of Provinces of the West, South and Midwest. The Superior General continues to support and encourage as well the efforts of the New England Province and the Eastern Province in their move toward possible reconfiguration. Another point discussed was a reexamination of the structure of the NCV as it reduces from five provinces to

three in 2010. The Superior General and his Council provided thoughts for the reflection of the Visitors on this matter.

In the reconfiguration of the provinces west of the Mississippi in the United States, they have chosen, after consultation, a new name for the province: Congregation of the Mission Western Province. The foundation date for the new province has been set for 25 January 2010 at which the Superior General will be present to inaugurate the new province. The Superior General wishes to thank the members of these provinces for their participation in this most difficult but important process of reconfiguration which he continues to hold up as a model to other provinces that need to move in the same direction, doing so for the best interests of those whom we serve in the mission.

16. We received from the **international mission** of El Alto, their community and apostolic project as well as a preliminary project on lay Vincentian volunteers for the mission in El Alto.

From the international mission of Papua New Guinea we had a brief report concerning candidates they have recruited from Papua New Guinea for the Congregation of the Mission and who will begin their process of formation under the guidance of the Province of Australia. The international mission in Papua New Guinea is also awaiting visas for two members of the Congregation of the Mission, Father Vladimir from Poland and Father Justin from Nigeria.

From the Solomon Islands, a letter was received from the Superior Greg Walsh, petitioning for more formators for the seminary, a subject that will be taken up in the Mission Appeal Letter in October. The seminary in the Solomon Islands awaits the return of Father Flaviano Caintic who has been recovering in his home province of the Philippines after heart surgery.

The Superior General and the Council also received a report from the Visitor of Poland, Father Arkadiusz Zakreta, of his most recent visit to Kazakhstan where the Congregation has been invited to establish a new mission. The Province of Poland will send in their first missionary in July with the hope of establishing a community later on. Kazakhstan is a large country, nine times larger than Poland itself, with a variable climate. The summer can be 40°C and in the winter as much as -40°C. Kazakhstan is a Muslim country, the second largest population being orthodox, and other religions including Catholics a very small minority. Congratulations to the province of Poland for yet another effort to spread the gospel in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.

17. The Council reviewed **requests for missions**, the first coming from the Conference of Bishops of the Antilles. They are asking for support in their regional seminary of St. John Vianney and the Ugandan Martyrs which is located in Trinidad. At present the seminary has only two full-time resident staff members and they are looking for personnel including teachers in philosophy, theology and liturgy, a resource person for developing a strategic plan, a spiritual director and in general they hope to strengthen the residential and formation staff. This will be further developed in the Mission Appeal in October, but if there is anyone who might be inclined to support this formation request, the language is English.

We also received a request from the Archbishop of Cochabamba for missionaries to participate in a parish there which has at present a lay team of Vincentian missionaries as well as the Daughters of Charity.

Another mission request comes from the Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba, asking for more missionaries to help support our three confreres who are presently working in his diocese. It is a vast mission territory which our confreres are ever trying to expand and yet for reasons of human energy and limitations they need reinforcements. This will be further developed as well in the Mission Appeal in October.

This is all the business that was treated. As I close I encourage you all to be creatively faithful to the Mission.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General