

GENERAL CURIA

RECIPIENTS OF THE MISSION AWARD, 2008

Rome, 30 July 2008

Feast of St. Justin de Jacobis

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 this the Feast of Saint Justin de Jacobis, a missionary *par excellence*, I announce to the worldwide Congregation the five projects that were granted the **Mission Award for 2008**. I want to thank the recipients of this award for their missionary creativity in their evangelization of the poor. I hope that all the projects presented will help to stimulate missionary creativity among confreres in other provinces.

Here is a brief description of each of the projects, as well as the goals and objectives proposed to make them realizable:

1. Province of Curitiba

Biblical, Pastoral, Social Formation and Animation of the Superagui Island and the neighboring islands

The Island of Superagui is a national reserve in the Atlantic Ocean in the southern part of Brazil. The areas that make up this national park were originally inhabited by the Tupiniquins and Carijós indians during Brazil's colonial period.

The region is formed by colonies of fishermen. There are approximately 1000 persons who reside on the Island; the majority of them are children. There are very few prospects for the future, because there are fewer and fewer fish and shrimp as larger fishing boats come from different places in Brazil to exploit the area.

During certain times of the year, many families suffer from hunger. There is a high rate of illiteracy and many people lack basic health care needs. There is no health system, either curative or preventive in place. There is no sport center for the children or young people who are often victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The missionary project intends to assist in, little by little, the restoration of the human dignity of the people of the island, helping them to articulate their faith and life, spirituality and action through biblical formation that is rooted in the reality of the island.

The missionary team is made up of four religious Sisters, two lay people and the pastor.

The project has two goals:

- Formation and enabling of faith leaders
- The biblical, pastoral and social animation of the inhabitants of the different islands.

The missionary team is aware that the process will be slow, but gradually they hope to involve the participation of the islanders and solicit the support of other persons of good will in the promotion that is possible and progressive.

Some of the objectives of the project are the following:

- To gain the confidence of the community
- To take initiatives to help recover the self-esteem of the leaders of the community
- To continue the formation, organization and capability of the islanders, especially the youth, children and other leaders
- To organize a plan of action that is participative at the social, economic, cultural and religious levels, to reveal the values, fears, needs and expectations of the youth of the community
- To provide spiritual, intellectual and professional formation for the youth in order to provide them with alternative ways of life to the way of drugs and violence which has a heavy presence in the islands
- To enable leaders for better actualization of the following pastorals: catechetical, liturgical and charity as well as financial administration

- To initiate the Children Missionaries in order that children might evangelize children
- To organize bible reflection groups for adults
- To organize a children's pastoral enabling volunteer leaders.

The missionary team responsible for this project is grateful for the opportunity to participate in the Mission Award to provide the formation and animation that is biblical, pastoral and social and benefits above all those who are excluded and denied their basic human and therefore Christian rights.

2. Province of Chile

Rural Areas of the St. Luis Gonzaga Parish in Chile

The parish, founded July 1, 1892, was entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission in 1995. The areas where we wish to develop a pastoral plan are located in the northeast section of the parish and are the places farthest from the city of Collipulli. The closest community to the parish center is 50 km away and the furthest is 80 km. The parish has 14 rural communities. Each time the visits to these places are short because of the distance which has to be traveled, and because of the need to visit a number of communities at one time. The roads are in poor condition especially in the winter months. Many times the visits are interrupted because of the rain, snow, and the insecurity of the place.

The goals of the project are to evangelize, mission and animate in the Vincentian style the rural communities of the parish of St. Luis Gonzaga, Río Amargo, Santa Julia, Canadá and Niblinto.

The project intends:

- To form parish leaders and to build missionary teams in order to develop activities on the weekends
- To do home visits of each community in order to strengthen the catholic presence in the area
- To prepare the children and adults for the reception of the sacraments of Christian initiation
- To select and form leaders as animators of the faith community
- To evangelize and animate the faith of the people
- To coordinate spiritual and material help for the families most in need.

Objective #1 To recreate the family and community experience in mission places.

Lines of Action	Activities
<p>Celebrate what we believe and believe what we celebrate</p> <p>To live the mystery of the Incarnation by discovering the human being today.</p>	<p>Creating liturgical teams</p> <p>Holding formation meetings to strengthen the Christian Catholic identity,</p> <p>Providing workshops on human relations</p> <p>Creating opportunities for dialog, reflection and formation regarding conflicts and interfamily violence</p>

Objective #2 To deepen their belonging to and co-responsibility in the church.

Lines of Action	Activities
<p>That the experience of Christ give meaning to our life and lead us to a profound permanent personal conversion</p> <p>To revitalize with the spirit of the primitive Christian communities, the base Christian communities</p>	<p>Offering instruments for growth and development in one's prayer life.</p> <p>Doing a biblical catechesis: learning how to read, understand, and meditate and pray with the Sacred Scripture (Lectio Divina)</p> <p>Forming and preparing ministers of the word of God.</p> <p>Promoting an interchange of experiences and witnesses with other base Christian communities.</p>

Objective #3 To form pastoral agents in order to strengthen their missionary identity.

Lines of Action	Activities
To discover, strengthen and put forth our baptismal commitment as disciples and missionaries	Providing workshops on missionary formation
To strengthen the missionary identity of different parish groups.	Offering materials with a missionary content. Helping others to assume a missionary conscience.

3. International Mission of Papua New Guinea
Holy Name Parish New Evangelization Project

Holy Name Parish was entrusted to the Vincentian Community in November 2007. The parish has 14 outstations scattered in a large territory that includes rural villages, problematic settlements, a government prison, a correctional institution, an institution for the mentally handicapped, and other institutions.

The goal is the implementation of an integral plan of new evangelization at Holy Name Parish through popular missions in order to become a community of communities in a permanent state of mission.

There are a number of **objectives** that will be accomplished:

- To organize a mission program to train parish leaders to assume the task of the New Evangelization
- To renew the life of small Christian communities by conducting retreats in the small villages and settlements of the parish
- To do home visitation and to organize meetings of families so as to reach out to those who are not actively involved in the life of the parish
- To organize a yearly popular mission during the Christmas novena in order to renew Christian life in the parish
- To give material and spiritual assistance
- To promote the justice and peace group
- To acquire catechetical materials for the Parish
- To support the missionary work of confreres in Woitape parish and other new places.

The following realities pose a challenge to us, Vincentians, in the task of evangelization of the poor at Holy Name Parish.

- Youth drug-addiction, unemployment and crime
- Poverty
- Out-of-school children and youth
- Tuberculosis, malaria, skin diseases, pneumonia
- Increase in HIV-AIDS
- Government corruption
- Tribal fights
- Family violence, especially against women
- Lack of respect for nature and the environment
- Lack of adult catechesis and Catholics joining other churches/sects
- Lack of catechists and lay ministers
- Lack of active participation by the faithful in the parish.

There are three parts to the plan: evangelization, development, charity. Only the first part — Evangelization — is developed here.

Kerygmatic: Its aim is that people receive the kerygma of the first proclamation of the gospel through the renewal of one's Christian commitment in baptism and confirmation.

Koinonia: In this stage the community will learn how to grow and persevere in the Christian life (formation in being disciples to becoming apostles who are sent on mission).

Community: In this stage the community will grow in the new life of Christ through the Word of God, prayer and fellowship; to become the Body of Christ, a small community of witness and evangelization.

Missionary: In this level missionaries will be formed from among the community. These will help make the parish into a permanent mission and promote growth through continuing visitation, catechesis at all levels, and the formation of new communities.

At the end of this first part the community will further promote the process of evangelization by establishing various ministries: formation of small Christian communities, catechesis, faith formation seminars, liturgy and social action, as well as special ministries such as family life, youth, health, and rehabilitation.

4. Province of South India

Faith Formation and Spiritual Revival Programs

Invited by the Bishops of the Latin dioceses of Trivandrum, Quilon and Neyyattinkara, the South Indian Province of CM has taken up faith formation and spiritual revival programs. The Faithful of these dioceses consist mainly of fishermen and daily waged workers. There is indifference and apathy to faith and moral decadence among the people.

The bishops invited the CM confreres to do what they can for the revival of faith. Accordingly there is a team of 9 confreres working in the area. They form teams of priests, religious and lay ministers to preach missions, to catechize, to visit homes and to animate life in the parishes. The training of lay ministers and the preaching of renewal retreats are working together in these dioceses. The team of confreres also makes itself available for spiritual talks, retreats and guidance of the diocesan priests, seminarians and religious of the area. The methods used are mission preaching, family visits and guidance, catechizing, bible classes and guidance courses for the preachers and lay ministers, fostering of Marian devotion and formation and guidance of basic Christian communities.

The goals of the project are the formation and training of Popular Mission Teams consisting of priests, religious and lay ministers and faith formation and spiritual renewals in various parishes of the diocese.

The **objectives** are:

- To hold training sessions, consisting of two full days each, once every three months, for the lay ministers and volunteers who would preach and assist in mission preaching. (These sessions will consist of Bible classes, guidance in spiritual counseling, skills of listening and praying over sick people and homiletic skills).
- To hold popular missions in all the parishes of these dioceses in three years' time. (This will consist of preparation by family visits, actual preaching, counseling, family guidance, reconciliation services, etc., and follow up of the retreats by visits and motivational prayer guidance.)
- To have talks, retreats and guidance for the priests, seminarians and religious of the area.
- To spread Marian devotion through AMM in all the parishes.

5. Province of Slovenia

The Integral Access to Evangelization and to Apostolic Service. “The greatest of these is love”

Through this project we would like to work to decrease spiritual poverty present in our world, and we would like to fight the different types of dependencies.

Criteria

The program addresses students 12-14 years old and young people 15-30 who want to fight increasing spiritual poverty as well as different types of dependencies in the developed world. The young people lose themselves more and more in the world of consumerism and the lure of pleasure. This is why we have prepared for them a year-long program composed of different elements:

- Summer vacation for preschool children and secondary school children
- Groups for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Groups of young people, students and animators.

While the children grow up and they still attend the catechism regularly, the Church has an exceptional chance for presenting to them a lifestyle different from what the world offers them. We try to educate these children and young people to love through the activities and in small groups. This program is aimed at children and youth of the whole deanery. The program aimed at children for Confirmation is based on making present the gospel of St. Luke, while the one for the youth and students is based on the Sunday gospels. This program entails the following:

- One week of vacation for the children — “Let’s draw the rainbow,” for 100 children with 25 young animators
- Meetings twice a month for the children for Confirmation in small groups (7-12 people) in the whole deanery (11 parishes), about 250 young people and 35 animators. Besides these regular meetings we prepare a meeting for all of them together with their parents. For these latter also, there is a program that invites them to deepen their relationship in marriage and to deepen their faith
- Meetings for young people and students twice a month
- Meeting for animators once a month
- A Mass for young people every month prepared by the young people of the deanery

- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament once a month and the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the young people of the deanery who prepare the liturgy
- A spiritual weekend for everyone according to their age range, where we build relationships on the chosen values in deepening the faith. Once a year we also invite the parents of the young people to the meeting.

The project responds to the following needs:

- The children, the young people and young couples need a clear spiritual orientation and an ongoing accompaniment, in order not to lose themselves in the mentality of a society of consumerism. The meetings and personal accompaniment correspond well to this need
- The young people lose themselves in consumerism if they are not in relation with those who share the same values
- The average age of the clergy in the deanery is 68. The Church cannot respond to these needs without new vocations. The formation of animators and of group leaders as well as working together meets this need
- There is a sufficient number of active young people; one must bring them together and give them an adequate formation, accompanying them and guiding them in working with the younger ones.

Through the insertion of young people and their parents in the program “the greatest thing is love,” the young people themselves and through them their families, change their outlook on the world. Materialism and consumerism give place to the Christian point of view. The need for prayer makes itself felt, family relations strengthen and they fall less often into different types of dependencies.

Through this program we try to break the harmful cycle of consumerism and individualism. The formation of relationships starts with the younger ones through the project “Let’s draw the rainbow,” which includes the young people and their parents and at a later time groups of students and animators. Through the interpersonal dialogs with the leader, the young people search for solutions to their problems and form themselves to be able to make serious decisions.

Being personally accompanied when living together helps them to build serious friendly bonds, that little by little become solid relationships as couples. In the group of students couples have formed who reflect on the seriousness of the union of marriage. We are convinced that these marriage unions will be more solid in the

future and that they will avoid the crises that often end up in a divorce.

In closing, I would like to remind all of you of the **object of the Mission Award**: “To acknowledge and support specific projects developed by individuals or groups of confreres that promote in a noteworthy way their missionary work.”

I pray that, through the intercession of St. Justin de Jacobis, God may give us the grace to continue to deepen our missionary spirit in the world where we are called to evangelize especially the most abandoned.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General