

TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR
(6-10 October 2008)

Rome, 3 November 2008

To the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Confreres,

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

From 6-10 October we held our *tempo forte* meeting. Among the more interesting items that we discussed were the following:

1. We had an update on the **350th Anniversary of the deaths of our holy Founders, Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac**. The international Executive Committee for this event, Father Józef Kapuściak, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Mission, Father Manuel Ginete, the delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family, and Sister Palmarita Guida, Daughter of Charity from the Province of Naples, met on 20 September with all the heads of the Commissions that have been created to organize the Anniversary. The major commissions are the Heritage Commission, the Celebration Commission and the Project Commission, which are supported by the Secretariat Commission and the Finance Commission. The Heritage Commission will be organizing ongoing formation sessions on Vincentian history, spirituality and experiences with the poor. The Celebration Commission at this time is planning two celebrations: one in Paris in March 2010 and the other in Rome in September 2010. The Project Commission is suggesting a specific project or projects for the poorest of the poor where various groups in the Vincentian Family may work together on the international level.
2. Within the Curia, we are **remodelling the General Archives**, which is taking place in three of the large rooms of the sub-basement floor of the General Curia.
3. Among the different items that were discussed in the **Econome General's report** was the Mission Distribution Fund for 2008 which was divided in the following way: Asia 22%, Africa 34%,

Eastern Europe 9% and Latin America 35%. This has been distributed for matters of formation, care of the elderly confreres and needs of our missionaries.

4. Brother Peter Campbell, Director of the **Vincentian Solidarity Office**, presented a report. Since our last *tempo forte* meeting the Vincentian Solidarity Office has taken on seven new projects, has looked for funding for ten projects and provided funding for five micro project grants. Brother Peter, also gave a report to the Superior General and his Council on the merger of the Vincentian Solidarity Office with the International Development Office. This report was prepared by Brother Peter Campbell, Father Miles Heinen, the new Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office, and Mr. Scott Fina. You are encouraged to check out the website of the Vincentian Solidarity Office www.famvin.org/vso.
5. The Council received a report from Manny Ginete, delegate for the Vincentian Family. Since our last *tempo forte*, Manny has been working with **Vincentian alumni international** with the hope of encouraging the alumni of the Congregation of the Mission and the Vincentian Family to strengthen their existing bonds with the charism of Saint Vincent de Paul which they have learned.

Father Ginete participated in the **Vincentian Family celebration** in Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia as well as at the international meeting of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul that was held during the World Youth Day in Sydney. At the Vincentian Family celebration, there were some 300 participants from 32 different countries. As many may know, the next World Youth Day will be held in Madrid in 2011 and we hope that the Vincentian Family might be able to organize something for and with our youth, perhaps again, prior to the World Youth Day event itself.

Father Ginete then visited the Vincentian Family, giving them a retreat in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as visiting a number of the different centers of the Vincentian Family. He met there with the Brothers of Charity who live a mere five kilometers away from DePaul Center where our confreres and Daughters of Charity have a well-established apostolic center. Then Father Ginete visited the Vincentian Family in Lima, Peru where he contributed a conference on systemic change and its repercussions on our Vincentian mission during their week of Vincentian studies. Every night, an average of 300 persons from among the confreres, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Charity and lay

members of the various Vincentian organizations actively participated. There are 19 groups of the Vincentian Family in Peru.

Father Ginete visited the Vincentian Family for a meeting and prayer on 26-28 September in Czestochowa, Poland, where 500 people from among the Congregation, the Daughters, the Ladies of Charity, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Vincentian Marian Youth and the Association of the Miraculous Medal participated. There was even representation from Belarus.

Father Ginete also gave an updated report, not only on his activities for the 350th Anniversary celebration, but also on the preparation for the continental sessions on systemic change for Vincentian leaders and advisors. In 2009 there will be four sessions: in Mexico in February, Brazil in June, Africa-Cameroon in July and Asia-Thailand in November. In addition, our Executive Secretary of the Vincentian Family Office, Sister Maria Pilar, attended a meeting of the Federation of the Sisters of Charity of Strasbourg in Untermarchtal and also a meeting of the Vincentian Family in Central America, which was held in Honduras.

6. **Other international news from the Vincentian Family.** Father Enrique Rivas, the National Director of the Association of the Miraculous Medal in Spain has been appointed as International Sub-Director of the Association of the Miraculous Medal. His responsibility will be to help in the coordination of the Jubilee Year, culminating in the international gathering in the rue du Bac, Paris, in November 2009. We thank Benjamin Romo, the previous Sub-Director for his generous contribution to the development of the AMM at an international level and we thank Enrique Rivas for his generous acceptance of undertaking this role, replacing Father Romo.
7. In a report that we received from Father Robert Maloney, the coordinator of the **Commission for Promoting Systemic Change**, he wrote to inform us that we have now in publication the book *Seeds of Hope, Stories of Systemic Change* in both English and Spanish. The French edition is in the process of being published. The English version of the book can be ordered for \$7.00 by e-mail at jmorse@svdpusa.org or kkneaves@svdpusa.org. The Spanish version can be obtained from the press of La Milagrosa, García de Paredes, 45 28010 Madrid, Spain, lamilagrosa@auronet.es.
8. **CIF Program.** We received a report from the Director of CIF on the last session that was held in Paris on Leadership, where there were in attendance a good number of Visitors from the

Congregation of the Mission, members of their Councils and other Regional Superiors

The Superior General and his Council have named as the Director of CIF Father Marcelo Manimtim of the Province of the Philippines for a period of five years renewable for three years. The Vice-Director of CIF is Father José Carlos Fonsatti of the Province of Curitiba. He has been exercising his responsibility since September of this year.

9. We reviewed the report from Father Joseph Foley, our **UN representative** and have asked that his report be published on the famvin website.
10. We then reviewed some items from the different **Conferences of Visitors**. The Superior General has prepared a letter to be sent to the Visitors of the Provinces of CLAPVI. He will be represented in their meeting in Argentina during October by Father José Antonio Ubillús. The meeting will be the opening of the Jubilee Year for the Province of Argentina which is celebrating 150 years of Vincentian presence.
With regard to COVIAM, we reviewed a report that was prepared by our delegate for formation in Africa, Father Sy Peterka.
11. We also reviewed some **petitions for candidates for different international mission experiences** as well as made a review of the reports that were received from the international missions of El Alto, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. We continue receiving requests from Bishops in different parts of the world for missionaries. We only hope and pray that the Lord might send us those laborers to work in his vineyard. One of the petitions came from a bishop who had worked with the Daughters of Charity in a previous diocese in Angola and now has been named to his own diocese. Another came from the Bishop of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands.
12. We completed our *tempo forte* with a report from the **SIEV Commission** which held its most recent meeting from 1-4 September in Barcelona, Spain. Because of the proximity of the General Assembly in 2010, SIEV has placed in its future program another session for Vincentian Scholars in 2011. Contents of the workshop that was held for the young investigators earlier will be presented in the first number of *Vincentiana* in 2009. The SIEV Commission also presented some initiatives on how we could celebrate the 350th Anniversary of the deaths of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise. Their suggestions include a symposium, publications, competitions and prizes of a literary and

artistic perspective. The SIEV Commission continues to prepare an introductory guide for Vincentian studies which when completed will be published in *Vincentiana*. Their next meeting is planned for October 2009 in the General Curia in Rome.

These are the major matters discussed and decided on in our most recent *tempo forte* meeting which I present for your reflection and information in regard to what is happening in the Congregation of the Mission at an international level.

Recall and reflect on the theme for our General Assembly 2010: **Creative Fidelity to the Mission.**

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General