

NUNTIA

Congregation of the Mission



May-June 2015

Activities of the Superior General

At the beginning of May, Father Gregory visited the Province of Madagascar, a place that he had visited on three other occasions. On this occasion Father General traveled to one of the most distant missions of the Province, namely, the mission of Midongy du Sud. He then visited another mission that is canonically related to Midongy du Sud, but is even more distant. There he was able to see the work of our confrere, Father Anton Kerin.

From there Father visited the community of Jangany where he was able to meet with our confrere from Italy, Tonino Cogoni, as well as Jean Marcel Fahamaro and Paulbert Fetiarison (who had recently arrived in Jangany after having ministered in Midongy du Sud). These three confreres are ministering in a very distant mission. On the second day of his journey Father Gregory was able to celebrate the Eucharist on the occasion of Father Noël Ramanandraibe becoming Director of the Daughters of Charity ... at the same time the community was able to thank the previous Director, Father Miguel Jesus Gutierrez, for his ministry with the Daughters.

During his travels Father met with the members of the Vincentian Family and all the traditional branches participated in this gathering. In addition the Sisters of

Nazareth (founded by our confrere, Blessed Antonio Durando) and the Sisters of Gethsemane (founded by the Servant of God, Giovanni Battista Manzela) participated in this meeting... these are two Congregations that have established houses in Madagascar and are being accompanied by the confreres from the Province of Turin (Italy).

The visit to Madagascar was concluded with the celebration of two significant events. The first event was the celebration of the Eucharist in the community of Akamasoa, a community where Father Pedro Opeka is ministering. Students and teachers from various school (more than 7,500 persons) participated in this dynamic and joyful celebration.

Secondly, Father Gregory was able to visit the Technical School in the capital (Antananarivo), a work that is administered by Father Hervé Magnoux, the provincial treasurer and Brother Olivier Razafimaharo. This school has made a significant contribution in preparing men and women for various technical careers: plumbers, construction, mechanics, metallurgy, etc. The confreres have been involved in this ministry for several years.

After his visit to Madagascar, Father returned to the Curia in Rome and participated in several meetings: the International Council of MISEVI, the VMY, the head of the Commission on Collaboration and the Office of the Vincentian Family, Joseph Agostino. Father Teodoro Barquin (the Province of Madrid) and our Vincentian Bishop, Germano Grachane (Nacala, Mozambique) visited the Curia.

Then beginning on May 15th, Father participated in the General Assembly of the Daughters of Charity. He traveled to Rome in order to participate in the meeting of the Union of Superiors General (May 27-29). He then returned to Paris in order to continue to participate in the General Assembly. In fact, at the beginning of the Assembly, Father gave a presentation and on five different occasions celebrated the Eucharist.



Province of Salamanca

During the month of May, Father Javier Álvarez, Vicar General, visited all the houses in the Province of Salamanca and shared with all the Missionaries. It should be remembered that the Province is located on the western coast of Spain and extends from Galicia in the north to Andalucía in the South. It becomes obvious to an observer that there is a great cultural diversity among the various regions (customs, cuisine, means of communication and accents). There are also many variations in the climate of this region (39 degrees in Córdoba, 15 degrees in León).

In order to visit the thirteen local communities of this Province one must travel some 2,000 kilometers. Among the houses there is the Interprovincial Seminary located in the large house in Salamanca and composed of six students and three formators. The Visitor, Father Juan de la Rosa, accompanied Father Álvarez during the twenty-five days of his visitation. Father Juan took advantage of this

opportunity to greet and dialogue with the Missionaries.

The confreres of this Province are animated by the Vincentian spirit and have a great love for their vocation. This is a strong fraternal spirit and the confreres are concerned about the process of evangelization and the poor. There is a wonderful spirit of unity and peace among the confreres and also there are good relationships between the confreres of different generations.

At the present time the Province of Salamanca is involved in a process of reconfiguration that will become a reality in the very near future. This process involves three Provinces: Salamanca, Madrid and Barcelona. Reconfiguration has been an important theme for discussion and dialogue.

The visitation was concluded



on May 27 which coincided with a gathering of the members of the Province to celebrate the ordination anniversary of two confreres: Father Pedro Pascual and Cástor Fernández; at the same time three Brothers celebrated the anniversary of their vocation day: Brothers Lisardo, Benito and Pablo.

Father Javier was grateful for the hospitality and the collaboration that he experienced in all the community houses that he visited. Blessed be God!

Province of the Congo: a new springtime!

Zeracristos Yosief, CM
Assistant General

During the Meeting of the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission (July 2013, New York) various conferences highlighted the fact that in certain parts of the world there is “a wintertime” with regard to vocations and in others areas there is the experience of a “springtime” in this regard. The Secretary General pointed out that in general the areas that are experiencing this “springtime” are: Africa, Asia and some countries in Latin America.

A few days ago I returned from a brief visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have to say that despite that many difficulties and setback that are being experienced by the people in this country, nevertheless it is one of the

well-springs of hope for the Congregation.

Anyone who has some knowledge of or familiarity with this Province knows that its recent past was not something that one would classify as “the better days”. But I also believe that we must avoid generalizations since there are many positive elements in the country and in the Province that should be highlighted. Therefore, in this brief communication to the readers of *Nuntia*, I want to share with you my experience which was very positive.

When the previous provincial administration had completed their term of office at the end of 2014, the Superior General began a consultation with regard to

the confirmation or the appointment of a new Visitor (and for his council). The confreres opted for the second alternative (the appointment of a Visitor) and therefore at the beginning of this year a new Provincial administration was formed. Father Bernardin Yoka was named Visitor. The new Visitor, following the Provincial Norms named his council: Father Blaise Monzoi Iyeli (Assistant Visitor), Justin Iluku Motya Bikopo (Director of the Daughters of Charity), Jean-Paul Munongo Manwana (writer), Augustin Boketa Ngambomo (formator), Jean Rufin Nkee Mokelo-Mo-Eyali (provincial treasurer and secretary, formator).

You might ask: why am I sharing this experience with the readers of *Nuntia*? First, I believe that it is important to have firsthand information especially in situations that have been commented on



and that involve such a complex social history. So what did I find there? I found a province that lives a normal, calm life. The confreres live and minister with serenity. Many confreres from different European Provinces spent their life in the Congo and still have some treasured memories and emotional ties with the land of Africa. During its history, the Province has experienced some difficult moment, but things are slowly changing. There is a saying: one who has made a good beginning is halfway to the goal ... and I can say that the new provincial administration has begun well. This administration wants to restore its vocational "springtime" and above all, wants to renew its prophetic vocation in the midst of the local church and among those men and women who are poor. I was filled with joy as I listened to the young members of the council say: *we ought to write a new page in our history, a page not written with words but with the example of our life*. All the Vincentian Missionaries in the Congo know that it is important and urgent to live evangelical simplicity, to be financially and morally transparent,

especially with regard to their following of Jesus Christ as they dedicate themselves to the service of the poor who are on the geographical and existential peripheries of society (a challenge that Pope Francis has extended to all of us). I was deeply touched by the positive attitude of the present provincial administration.

I am impressed by the internal energy of the Province which will enable it to be more and more creative. It is a Province whose members do not allow themselves to be crushed by problems, but faces those situations calmly and seriously. It is a Province that has had to live with problems (especially during the years 2009-2010). Nevertheless, the confreres are aware of the fact that life is made up of light and shadows, nights and day, successes and failures ... and nothing is definitive unless we decide to give up hope and surrender. Winston Churchill once said: *success is the ability to move from one failure to another without losing enthusiasm*. The confreres in the Congo have experienced the meaning of those words: there were problems, there are problems and there will be problems in the future but they have made the decision to

move from situation to another without losing enthusiasm.

That is life and with my own eyes I have seen the positive attitude of the confreres with regard to the past, but more

especially as they look toward the future.

At the conclusion of this brief document I can say that the Province of the Congo and its younger members are and will remain the hope of the Congregation of the Mission. The problems that they have experienced has strengthened their zeal, their hope and their good will. After having listened to so many confreres in Kinshasa I remembered the words of Mahatma Gandhi: *men can trample upon and destroy the flowers ... but they cannot halt the arrival of spring*. Yes, the Province of the Congo is a flower that is flourishing in the Congregation of the Mission, in the local church ... its members are ministering on behalf of those who are poor.

The new provincial administration has many challenges to confront among which are, initial and on-going formation, the financial crisis of the Province and a pastoral plan that was begun by the previous administration. The good will and the enthusiasm that I witnessed among the confreres ministering there gives me confidence that the Province is in good hands and that it will continue to move forward.

The Province of Cuba: Challenges and Perspectives

Father Eli Chaves dos Santos, CM
Assistant General

From May 10-25, 2015 Father Chaves made a canonical visitation of the Province of Cuba and now shares with us the Vincentian reality of that Province which is filled with missionary vitality and possibilities while at the same time aware of its needs and challenges.

The Province of Cuba has a history that goes back 150 years. With the triumph of the socialist revolution (1959) the Province, which had more than sixty members, entered a period that saw **a significant reduction in its numbers and in its missionary activity**.



In the past two years the Province has experienced an unstable and precarious situation with regard to personnel (at the present time there are ten confreres in four local communities, one confrere is elderly and infirm and two are absent) The missionaries have resisted and persevered in this mission, serving with great faith, dedication and generosity ... they have ministered in the midst of the social-political context of Cuba (restrictions and controls placed upon the Church's activity, promotion of a materialist Marxist ideology, an authoritarian political regime, an economic embargo, a generalized impoverishment of the people, an inability to develop personal freedom, etc.).

Within the Cuban Church (small and suffering, missionary and alive) the modest Vincentian missionary presence presents great potential for the development of the process of evangelization among the poor. The confreres live in poverty and carry out their mission in the midst of the poor. In their work there are some very significant missionary initiatives: the search for an integral evangelization (word and charitable activity); the methodology of home-mission (the confreres have formed small communities which, in

accord with the Document of Aparecida, enable the parish to be a network of communities, groups and movements); providing for the needs of the poor through social ministry and homes for the elderly. The presence of the Vincentian Family and collaboration between the Congregation and the branches of the Vincentian Family is a reality in all the local communities. At the present time there are six seminarians (one in the internal seminary in Guatemala, two are in the third year of philosophy in Cuba and three are in the first year of preparation). **The lack of personnel is extreme and unsettling** because in order to provide for the minimum needs of their works, at the very least five new missionaries are needed. The lack of personnel and instability of some of the members creates difficulties with regard to the institutional functioning of the Province, with regard to the development of the mission in light of the many pastoral challenges, with regard to the organization of stable communities and with regard to the development of a community plan and a pastoral plan. Formation lack better human and material conditions that would enable the further develop of a vocational plan and the execution of a plan for initial and on-

going formation. The material conditions in which the confreres live and work are lacking in many vital areas; there is a lack of material resources that would enable better missionary services to be developed. There is a lack of financial resources ... the Province has no income and is dependent on outside assistance in order to survive.

The current missionary possibilities and challenges and the lack of an institutional foundation for the functioning of the Province make it clear that **there is a need for**

reconfiguration with regard to this Province. This could be viewed in two different ways. First, the confreres could study the possibility of an institutional reconfiguration, transforming the Province of Cuba into a region of some nearby Province and would then involve the participation of missionaries from other Provinces. Second, this situation could be viewed as a reconfiguration of the missionary activity, viewing the mission in Cuba from a global perspective. This would involve developing an action plan (presenting possibilities and challenges) that would attempt to envision the future ministry in this province so that this could be presented to confreres who might desire to minister in Cuba.

There is an urgent need to intensify our solidarity with this Province and to send more Missionaries there in order to maintain, reconfigure and impel the Vincentian mission in Cuba. At the present time there is much talk about the possibility of social and political changes in Cuba. We pray that the presence of the Congregation of the Mission might grow quantitatively and qualitatively in order to respond prophetically to the present and future cries of the poor in this suffering yet courageous country!

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Cuba - Parish in a State of Mission

P. Jesus M. Lusarreta, CM
Province of Cuba

We are working in a Vincentian manner, seeking to give response to two challenges:

1. In Cuba, it is said, it is not possible to do anything ... because they do not allow it.

2. The Vincentian Popular Missions do not have a response to the last phase of the mission: the follow-up, or post-mission.

Let us start with our traditional mission approved in Paris in 1998.

The Vincentian mission will have distinct parts:

1. The Preparation for the Mission

Objective: Foster a missionary atmosphere in the place; discover the mission houses that are needed for the development of the mission, and prepare the agents or catechists who will develop the missionary catechesis in small ecclesial communities. Always be attentive to the local idiosyncrasies. Duration: not less than six months.

2. The Mission Itself

Objective: Evangelize through the small communities formed in the homes of neighbors, in the midst of the neighborhood, the entire community of the baptized, with missionary support from the most mature in faith within the community. "To evangelize is ... to bear witness" (EN 26).

3. The Post-Mission, continuity of the mission

Objective: Leave the parish in a state of mission with communities orientated toward different ministries.

In our parish of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

We wanted to try, in spite of the lack of means, to see if it were possible to maintain this type of Vincentian mission and we dared to translate its objectives into letters and numbers:

Objectives of our mission

1. Depending on the number of inhabitants and of baptized:

"Develop 130 small communities, as CDR centers; that is, a Mission House by block."

2. Take, person-to-person, the first announcement to awaken the faith, that is, to all the baptized, which, according to our statistics, is 82% of our population, approximately 17,000 inhabitants.

3. Have the entire parish live its faith through the catechumenal process indicated by the Church.

The first stage of the mission lasted five years.

There we discovered that we were missing the most elementary piece: the Christian yeast that leavens the dough. We did not have in the parish mature Christians, capable of going house-to-house,

"revealing themselves as Christians," and announcing Jesus Christ. We had to await the arrival of six Spanish youth from the JMV, who began this journey with us one summer. The first experience was powerful: "It had been 50 years since someone had knocked at a door saying that he/she was a Christian from the Catholic Church and that he/she came to tell them that 'God loved them.'" The result was very positive.

With those convened, the first Christian community was formed and, sometime later, the second. With the members of these communities and a new summer, we gave what we called the First Preparation Mission: "We go door to door, call them by name, and we ask those in the house to come together as Christians, to listen to the Word, and to pray for the deceased." The fruit of this mission was 14 mission houses.

We continued this, year after year, developing catechesis in the mission houses and forming communities of adults that will provide catechists for us. After five

years, we had 80 mission houses in the neighborhood, seven communities of adults, a Catechists' School, an Evangelization School, and a Charity Residence with 80 elderly people. We thought that the bases had been developed for deepening the Vincentian mission and we set out to sea.

The second stage of the mission: toward the development of the objectives.

The channels of the mission had been developed, but we had a long way to go. We felt the urge to deepen our charism. In Cuba, the Vincentian Family was gone; there were neither the AIC, nor the JMV, nor the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, only a few remnants of the AMM, but very few. The coming of Pope John Paul II had opened the windows to the light and some of the fear of appearing as Christian was lost. It was time to open the doors for the Vincentian Associations, beginning with the JMV, and then continuing to open the doors to the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, to the AIC, and to enhancing the AMM.



We already have experienced God's closeness, his profound presence, and his blessing.

The family has grown strong in the AIC, with more difficulties in the JMV, expansion in the AMM, and more timid, but also good, in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

In this second stage of the mission, we came to taste the happiness of "achieving some goals." "Your cry has gone out to all the earth," says the Apostle. To the entire parish the announcement of the Gospel has come. We visited the houses door to door on 18 occasions, formed 130 mission houses in the parish's blocks, the Charity Residence for the elderly has been approved by the government, and we continue a rather integral attention to 190 needy elders. We have been able to achieve the goal of serving 24 young people with Down's syndrome in a workshop-home and have had the pleasure of seeing that we are fulfilling the Lord's will.

Third part of the mission: consolidate, continue in a state of mission.

We enter the most difficult stage: to consolidate what was developed. The three ministries: Word, Charity, and Liturgy have their specific tasks. How do we consolidate what was developed?

Saint Vincent has enlightened us greatly in the style "of serving in charity" and the Documents of the Church: Santo Domingo, John Paul II's *Evangelization in America*, and the Document of Aparecida have been, along with *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the sources for the work of consolidation.

1. Sociological Aspect:

We began by dividing the parish into ten sectors. Sectoral work is well known in the socialist regime and easily understood.

Each sector is divided in turn into small groups of three adjacent mission houses that form what we called a vicarage, "a micro-

parish." We ended up with 58.

2. Pastoral Dimension:

The micro-parish is the small parish animated and coordinated by a lay vicar responsible for seeing that, in the vicarage, the different ministries of the parish function: charity, catechesis for adults and children, liturgy, and spiritual attention to the sick.

To support this pastoral life, new communities, that we call reference, have been developed: they are made up of the vicars, the persons in charge, and the catechists of every mission house. There are ten sectors, so there are ten reference communities. Each of them consists of five to eight vicars and, therefore, from 15 to 20 mission houses.

3. Parish in a community of communities and Movements:

This pastoral style makes people feel they really belong to the "little community," but, in turn, they also feel very much a part of the parish. The associations are the base of the communities, because the people enter the association after having gone through the community's catechumenal process and then they serve us in ministry very effectively.

4. With Vincentian spirituality:

Our community knows, admires, and follows our Founder, "as a leader who opened a way of incarnation in the poor person," and knew the way to go. Vincent de Paul is the great follower of Jesus Christ who reveals to us that "it is not enough for me to love God, if my neighbor does not love him," and therefore there can be no "conversion to Jesus Christ" without the clear need to give it to others. One cannot love the neighbor without being concerned about the integral needs of the brother and sister: "I was hungry and you gave me to

eat; I was sick and you visited me." In this spirit, or if you will, enlightened in that Vincentian spirit, a great sense of accompaniment of the needy, the elderly, and those who suffer has developed. Every vicarage has its president of the Charity and every mission house its member of the Charity. The 156 members of the AIC and the 24 brothers of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul worthily cover the positions of responsibility of the ministry of charity in the parish.

5. "Love is inventive to infinity":

Following Saint Vincent, imagination is essential. In a country like ours, it is necessary to be very attentive to the difficulties of the journey and, if one wants to act, it is necessary to learn to overcome the difficulties. Imagination has made us think in new forms for taking the Eucharist to the homes, catechizing the neighborhood, and bringing the sacraments to the sick. We have counted on means and have tried various actions: for example, celebrations of communal anointing of the sick in the style of the popular missions; Masses in the doorways of the houses in order not to break the law but be near the people; Christmas meal for the oldest people on the blocks; Easter food for the ten oldest people on each block, reaching a total of 1554; the establishment of prophets among the adolescents of the Missionary Childhood; itinerant missionaries who take care of requests from other parishes and also our own needs; the community's mother catechists in the pastoral preparation for First Communion; the establishment of formation schools that prepare the missionaries and catechists; etc.; a life that fills a life.

6. Organization of the pastoral centers:

- The mission house as the central core
- The Vicarage as reference parish: n parish
- The Sector as center of pa coordination.

A living memory: 250 years since the birth of Saint Joan Antida Thouret

Giuseppe Turati, CM
Secretary General



Last 23 May, an interesting initiative on the occasion of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Saint Joan Antida Thouret was held in the Chapter Room of the General House of the Sisters of Charity in Rome. In a climate of great fraternity, three moments were experienced, with several interventions, both by some members of the Vincentian Family and by collaborators of the Sisters of Charity.

In a first event, there was the presentation of two precious testimonies on the vitality of the charism of the Sisters of Charity. The first testimony presented a model of charity of our time: Blessed Enriqueta Alfieri, called, “The angel of San Vittore’s prison” in Milan, who, from 1923 to 1951 (the year in which she died), carried out a precious ministry of consolation and support to the Jews and political prisoners, becoming a point of reference for all those imprisoned during the dark years of the Nazi invasion. During his talk, Msgr. Ennio Apeciti, Ambrosian priest, professor of Church History and responsible for the office of the causes of the saints of the

Archdiocese of Milan and presently Director of the Lombardy Pontifical Seminary, spoke with competence. Also speaking was Sister Wandamaria Clerici, Director of the Major Institute of Gorgonzola, a writer and passionate scholar of Sister Enriqueta Alfieri.

The second testimony was presented by Sister Paule Germaine Corbani, Lebanese by birth, Egyptian and Sudanese by adoption, who has carried out her apostolate for 35 years in Egypt, where she was the first woman to obtain a diploma in Arabic language and literature in an Islamic university. Later, she was transferred to Sudan, where she opened a school of religious sciences recognized even by the local government. As part of the celebration, Sister Paule presented with passion the courageous service rendered by the Sisters of Charity in an environment strongly influenced by the Islamic culture.

The second moment was the celebration of the Eucharist, presided by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, and concelebrated by eight priests from various congregations, with the singing led by the young sisters and aspirants of the

Congregation of the Sisters of Charity. The Cardinal emphasized how Blessed Enriqueta Alfieri could “see with the heart” of Christ and judge reality as the Lord had done, without calculating the risks that could exist in that moment. Likewise, many disciples of Saint Joan Antida Thouret worldwide continue living out the challenges of evangelization.

A community dinner in a climate of happiness and great fraternity concluded the beautiful day and the wonderful initiative, which could wake up in those present the beauty and the force of Consecrated Life when it is nourished on Christ’s love and comes to fruition in the disinterested love for its brothers and sisters. Father Gregory Gay, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity, was invited to participate in the event, but because he was in Paris at that time to take part in the General Assembly of the Daughters of Charity, he was represented by Fathers Jorge Luis Rodríguez of the Vincentian Family Office and Giuseppe Turati, Secretary General of the CM.

The Development of the Vincentian Conference of Presidents

Fr. Joe Agostino, CM

Origins

On March 30, 2011, the three Provincial Councils of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States held a joint meeting in which the Superior General was encouraged to convene a gathering of the Congregation's three U.S. Universities in order to foster a collaborative dialogue among them.

That first meeting was held on November 17, 2012 in Philadelphia, Pa. It was attended by Fr. G. Gregory Gay (Superior General), Frs. Dennis Holtschneider, Donald Harrington, and Joseph Levesque (the Presidents of DePaul, St. John's, and Niagara Universities respectively), Frs. Perry Henry and Michael Carroll (Visitors of the Western and Eastern Provinces) and Fr. Joseph Agostino (facilitator).

It was a wonderful experience of the Vincentian charism at work, opening new possibilities for the continued service of the poor in this vital ministry of higher education. The presidents decided to meet at least annually to continue this dialogue. They also wished to invite the other two Congregation sponsored institutions of higher education to the next meeting. Adamson University (Fr. Gregory Bañaga) and All Hallows College (Fr. Patrick McDevitt) accepted this invitation. The second meeting of the presidents occurred on October 17, 2013 at St. John's University, NY.

As a fruit of these initial dialogues, and as a result of the recommendations received from the international leaders of the Vincentian Family, Fr. Gay thought it would be advantageous to the Vincentian Family, and the poor whom we serve, to invite all of the Vincentian Family's Colleges and Universities to come together to explore possible avenues of collaboration with one another internationally.

In his letter of invitation, he wrote:

Such collaboration could have great potential to benefit each of the institutions individually and all of them collectively. It could also awaken in us the recognition of how much of a greater impact we can have on today's society when we work with one another and not in isolation.

This invitation was well received. On May 8, 2015, six presidents gathered at DePaul University, Chicago, for the first meeting of this newly formed body. Present were Fr. James Maher, C.M., Niagara University; Fr. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., DePaul University, Chicago, IL; Fr. Gregory Bañaga, C.M., Adamson University, Manila, Philippines; Dr. Bobby Gempesaw, St. John's University, NY; Fr. Varghese (Biju) Chittooparamban, C.M., DePaul College, Mysore, India; and Dr. Helen Streubert, College of St. Elizabeth, Morristown, NJ. Fr. John Maher represented the Superior General and Fr. Joe Agostino was the meeting coordinator.

Manifestations of the Vincentian Charism

The day began with reports from each president on the efforts their institutions make to advance the Catholic and Vincentian identity of their

respective schools. What follows are the highlights of their presentations, listed in alphabetical order.

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY - MANILA, PHILIPPINES



- Vincentian Formation Sessions: These programs celebrate the life, spirituality, and legacy of St. Vincent de Paul for the various sectors of AU, faculty, staff, and students.
- Integrated Community Service Extension Services (ICSE) spearheads programs and projects in numerous urban relocation sites using the Systemic Change framework.
- Systemic Change Initiatives: This effort has a two-fold focus: first, it provides seminars and workshops for the AU community and the Vincentian Family; it also gives a biennial award to recognize organizations with community programs based on systemic change.
- Charity Hub relief operations: Begun as an emergency relief operation in 2009, AU is now a designated hub for relief operations. Students and alumni coordinate these efforts.
- Collaboration with the Vincentian Family: AU actively collaborates with the Vincentian Family branches in the Philippines to promote various projects. An AU representative attends the regular meetings of leaders of the fifteen Vincentian Family branches.
- Summer Vincentian Popular Missions: This is a three-week program for those wishing to be lay missionaries in the Vincentian tradition. They travel to far-off rural areas to serve.

COLLEGE OF SAINT ELIZABETH – CONVENT STATION, NEW JERSEY



Established by the Mother Seton Sisters of Charity in 1899, the college is currently undergoing much revision through the work of its first lay president, Dr. Helen Streubert. She has worked along with the Board of Trustees and her administrative team to redefine the mission of this all-women's school of 1500 students. It includes the following:

- Recognition that the College is no longer an enclave for white middle-class young women; 67% of its current students are from families living below the federal poverty line.
- Employing a targeted outreach to empower young women from minority communities, in particular Hispanics, by efforts to both recruit and retain them at the College.
- The college just hired its first full-time campus minister (with assistance from St. John's University), and will move to offer Vincentian charism-based programs and services.

DEPAUL COLLEGE – MYSORE, INDIA



DePaul College is a new school, established in 2013 by the Southern India Province of the Congregation of the Mission and affiliated with the University of Mysore. It is the first work of higher education in India sponsored by the Congregation. To promote the

Vincentian charism, DePaul makes these efforts:

- Providing scholarships to students 35% of whom are from low economic backgrounds;
- Establishing a Center for Service Learning to provide opportunities to serve the poor and marginalized in local communities. It includes outreach programs with non-profit organizations, service projects in rural districts, and teaching English at local schools.
- Training students to take the "Union Public Service Examination", DePaul instills values of social justice and concern for the poor to those who aspire to government service.
- Vincentian presence through artwork in significant locations on the campus provides a tangible way to advance understanding and awareness of St. Vincent and our charism.

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY- CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



The Office of Mission and Values administers its activities and programs under seven categories: orienting new students and employees to the Vincentian culture; building a sense of community; education and enrichment; develop leadership capacity; promoting research, and serving the community. In each of these categories are multiple programs that reached thousands of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These are some highlights:

- New employee orientation for 215 people; summer orientation for over 5,000 incoming students. Both were geared toward better understanding DePaul's Vincentian mission.
- Catholic intellectual tradition series and DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archive Lectures. Both provide a valuable exchange of ideas and generate interest in Vincentian history.

- Digital media: Using the extensive digital methods available, DePaul has made a vast array of our Vincentian heritage and its literature accessible across the world. This is a great global service available to all who wish to know more of the Vincentian Family.
- Vincentian Library and special Collections. This is a traditional library and museum and a digital portal providing great access to both new and seminal Vincentian materials.
- Developing leadership capacity in the Vincentian tradition by scholarships for visiting priests from other countries at DePaul; the Vincentian Endowment Fund which provides grants for projects to enhance De Paul's Vincentian identity; and the Vincentian Mission Institute, an intensive two-year program which forms leaders in our Vincentian charism.

NIAGARA UNIVERSITY – NIAGARA, NEW YORK



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- The Levesque Center for Civic Engagement connects students and staff to serve the local community in educational and service projects in the Vincentian approach.
- The Vincentian Mission Institute trains faculty and staff in the charism of St. Vincent, in a two-year program, which includes seminars and times for reflection.
- NU has a formal affiliation with a local charity: Heart, Love, and Soul Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen. University staff serves as Board members, consultants, and workers. NU students assist Heart, Love, and Soul as volunteers.
- Vincentian Scholars are students receiving a partial scholarship who commit to learning about the Vincentian charism both in classes and through extensive community service.
- Family Literacy Center: This project of the School of Education assists local residents and young children by tutoring them to improve their reading and writing skills.

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY – JAMAICA, NEW YORK



St. John's is being led by its first lay president, Dr. Bobby Gempesaw. He spoke of the three ways the Vincentian Mission is accomplished at St. John's: through the Office of University Mission, the Department of University Ministry, and Vincentian Center for Church and Society. Here are the main points of each:

- University Mission provides orientation programs for new employees (950 since 2003); Mission Certificate program had over 150 employees complete a two-year program that trains lay leaders in the Vincentian tradition; and a University Service Day with over 100 sites to do service.
- University Ministry: Catholic Literati, Vincentian Initiative to Advance Leadership (VITAL), Vincentian Institute for Social Action (VISA), and Ozanam Scholars. In each program, students are given scholarships, mentoring, and training in the Vincentian charism, along with academic credit to do research on ways to alleviate poverty and promote systemic change.
- Vincentian Center of Church and Society: Founder's Week, a series of activities that highlight the Vincentian heritage, is held on a major Vincentian feast. Research Fellows program engages faculty for effective teaching and scholarly research on a topic in their field of study related to some aspect of the Vincentian charism. A biennial conference on Social Justice is made up of seminars on a current topic related to poverty, with help from faculty. A recognized speaker with competence in this field is the keynote speaker.

Additional Topics

The presidents discussed a document entitled **Vincentian Sponsorship of Universities**, published in 2014 as a guide for those provinces of the Congregation of the Mission which sponsor institutions of higher education. The presidents thought that it could be a helpful guide for any

institution seeking to promote the Vincentian charism throughout its structures. Many believe the statement serves as a benchmark for setting a standard to disseminate and to measure the effect of the Vincentian charism on campus.

In a discussion about ways to promote research and disseminate the Vincentian charism, the presidents were interested in knowing what specific steps the Congregation of the Mission has taken in this area. Fr. John Maher gave a brief history of about the purpose and work of SIEV, and its current status. The presidents spoke of their willingness to encourage faculty in their schools to support this endeavor. The presidents believe that including laity, especially faculty who are skilled in research, could enliven SIEV and promote new Vincentian scholarship among the younger generation. They suggested SIEV focus on this question: *“What is the changeless message of the Vincentian charism as it is expressed in a particular culture, region, or time period?”*

The presidents then decided that they would form among themselves a permanent body named the *Vincentian Conference of Presidents*, which will be convened at least annually. They believe that moving

in this direction will help them to solidify their working relationships and establish cooperative programs among their educational institutions. The person to act as coordinator of the group would be a University/College president, and this role will rotate every two years. The first coordinator is Fr. James Maher of Niagara.

Next Steps

The presidents decided to attach their 2016 meeting to a larger “Vincentian Education Conference” as part of a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States. Dr. Gempesaw agreed to host this meeting at St. John’s University in New York. The date is yet to be determined.

In addition, it is hoped that additional Vincentian Family universities and colleges will be able to participate. The presidents are formulating an invitation list to include institutions from the Philippines, Indonesia, and the United States, among other countries.

First Meeting of Vincentian Bishops



Many of the participants liked the presentation with regard to statistics and therefore we present the following:

- In the Congregation there are 34 bishops.
- Of these 34, 2 are cardinals, 6 archbishops, 20 bishops, 2 prelates and 4 apostolic vicars.
- 17 of the bishops are active and 17 are emeritus

The bishops are exercising their ministry in the following countries: Portugal, Brazil, Guatemala, Argentina, Lebanon, Italy, United States, Philippines, Colombia, Poland, Mozambique, India, Mexico, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Peru, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Honduras

This meeting becomes part of the history of the Congregation

because it is the first such gathering of this nature ... this meeting took place in an environment of Vincentian fraternity and simplicity.

As Father Gregory Gay, CM, superior general, welcomed the participants he also expressed his gratitude to the bishops and reminded them that they not only represent the cultural diversity of the diocese which they shepherd but they also reflect the diverse pastoral challenges that must be confronted on a daily basis. Father Gregory affirmed the fact that this reality should be viewed as a source of enrichment especially in light of the significance that all of this takes on for the larger Church. Father Gregory spoke of the fact that the vast majority of the Vincentian Bishops serve in places where there is great poverty (not only because of the lack of resources,

but also because they have few priests in their diocese and few lay people who have been adequately prepared for ministry). As a result of their witness to the faith the Vincentian bishops enrich the Church and strengthen the church in its ministry of love and service.

Father General presented a report with regard to the state of the Congregation of the Mission. He referred to five areas which the Congregation has focused on during the past five years:

- Initial and on-going formation (Ration Formationis)
- Reconfiguration
- The Vincentian Family and the Year of Collaboration
- Creativity in our ministries
- Promotion of systemic change

Father also reminded the participants of some significant events that the Congregation is preparing to celebrate: the 2016 General Assembly and the 400th anniversary of the birth of our charism (at the same time the Congregation is mindful of the celebration of the Jubilee Year of Mercy). After his intervention the superior general responded to concerns, questions and proposals that were raised by the bishops.

We highlight two moments in this gathering that was very enriching for the participants. The first moment was a presentation by Bishop Varghese Thottamkara with regard to the relationship between the Vincentian Bishops and the Congregation of the Mission which was then followed by a dialogue. During this time of sharing the

bishops were invited to reflect upon, to discuss and to evaluate that relationship (its strengths and weaknesses and ways to strengthen that relationship). This time of sharing experiences enabled the participants to become more aware of the reality that their brother bishops had to confront and ultimately, allowed the bishops to strengthen their bonds of solidarity and prayer with one another. Each participant was given ample time to share with the other participants his experience of ministry as a bishop (personal experiences, the situation of the local church, the reality of the country in which the bishop ministered, his relationship with the Congregation, especially with the Province in which he had been a member).

The second important

moment was the afternoon of prayer and reflection that was directed by Bishop Alfonso Cabezas. The reflections and prayer revolved around the theme of the next General Assembly, namely, *let us allow ourselves to be renewed by the missionary vitality of our Vincentian vocation.*

The gathering was concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist that was presided by Cardinal Franc Rodé. In his homily he reviewed some of the history of the Congregation and reminded the participants about the ministry of some of the Vincentian saints who were also bishops, such as Saint Justin de Jacobis. *These men were generous, Eucharistic men, men consumed by charity ... to be a Vincentian bishop is to spend oneself on behalf of the gospel.*

Bishop Jorge Garcia Isaza, Vicar Apostolic Emeritus of Tierradentro, Colombia

As a result of the suggestion of one of the bishops, the superior general organized this First Meeting of Vincentian Bishops (Rome). This has been a wonderful experience. At the present time there are thirty-four bishops in the Congregation of the Mission (half of whom are emeritus and the other half are exercising the ministry that the Church has entrusted to them).

During this gathering we had the opportunity to share our experiences and to express our love for the Little Company. The superior general and the members of council were very attentive to our needs and enabled us to experience anew the value of fraternity. The Daughters of Charity, who reside in the Casa Maria Inmaculada, provided us with lodging and allowed us to use their house for our meeting.

We hope that in the coming years this meeting will be followed by others.

I simply want to express my gratitude to all those individuals who made this gathering possible and at the same time I give thanks to God for being able to participate in this gathering. May Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal fill all people with countless blessings!



Bishop Markos Gebremedhin CM Vicar Apostolic of Jimma-Bonga Ethiopia



First of all I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to our Superior General Very Rev. Gregory Gay and the members of the General Council for taking initiative in organizing such a wonderful gathering of the Vincentian bishops.

To my knowledge this is the first such meeting in the history of the Congregation of the Mission, that is, a gathering in which the bishops of the Congregation of the Mission were able to come together and share their experiences.

Meetings of this nature provide me with the opportunity to know the other Vincentian bishops who are ministering in various and diverse countries. This gathering provided all the participants with an opportunity to share and to come to a greater awareness of the challenges and the oppressive structures that we must confront in our ministry.

This gathering also provided us with an opportunity to renew ourselves as we continue to minister on behalf of the people of God. We were able to reflect on some of the pastoral priorities that flow from our Vincentian identity. In fact, our Constitutions and the universal law states: “a religious who is raised to the episcopate remains a member of his Congregation but is not bound to their rule but is to be obedient to the Holy Father”. This doesn't prevent us from making known to our people St. Vincent and his charisma today. Indeed, Vincent's spirituality and his charism are very relevant today.

As a Vincentian bishop I feel that I am representing the Congregation in the Vicariate where I am ministering. As an ambassador of Christ and a son of St. Vincent de Paul I am strengthened in my ministry of encouraging the clergy and the faithful to follow and imitate our Lord Jesus Christ who is teacher, priest and shepherd.

Therefore while thanking Very Rev. Fr. Gregory Gay and his council I would like to make the following recommendations: [1] We have to guarantee that these dialogues are not lost and for this end I would suggest the formation of a committee to work with the Superior General and his council on different issues regarding Vincentian bishops; [2] I suggest that Vincentian bishops be allowed to take part in Provincial Assemblies where there are other Vincentians in said vicariate or diocese that has been entrusted to the Congregation; [3]. I would also like to suggest that one or two bishops could represent all the Vincentian bishops at the General Assembly; [4] I suggest due attention be given to sick and aged confrere bishops; [5] I suggest that a workshop be offered to the bishops which would focus on collaboration and solidarity among Vincentian bishops. Thank you.



Bishop Rolando Santos, C.M. Papua New Guinea

After I was appointed bishop, I thought that my relationship with the Congregation of the Mission has ended. I was wrong. At the suggestion of Bishop Varghese Thottamkara, Fr. G. Gregory Gay, the Superior General of the C.M., invited all the Vincentian Bishops of the world for a 3-day meeting at the Casa Maria Inmaculada in Rome, from the 23rd to the 25th of June, 2015. This came to me as a pleasant surprise. It is one of those extraordinary blessings I will never forget. Of the 34 Vincentian bishops in the world, 21 were present. 14 were emeritus, and these included Card. Franc Rode, former Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of

Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, who presided at the closing Mass.

In his opening talk, the Superior General said that we, Vincentian Bishops, are part of the “abundance of riches” found in the Congregation. As we empower God's people, we enrich the Church by the testimony of our faith. He then spoke to us about the theme of the coming 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation: “Creative Fidelity to the Mission”. We need to renew the vitality of our Vincentian charism and revitalize our ministries. There is need for collaboration among ourselves and with the entire Vincentian Family, and show solidarity with those who have less. Living with fidelity our Vincentian charism is our response to the Pope's challenge for the Year of Mercy.

During this meeting with my fellow Vincentian bishops, I realized that I never really left the Congregation. My past struggles to become a Vincentian were the best preparation for me to become a good bishop of the Church. I also never felt myself more a Vincentian as when I became a bishop. My Episcopal motto as bishop of Alotau, Papua New Guinea, is Caritas et Missio. The witness of charity and the mission of evangelization are my principal duties as bishop of my diocese. With these I felt completely clear as to what I am called to be in the Church as a bishop.

The 3-day experience of meeting and sharing with my fellow Vincentian bishops, of listening to talks, eating, praying and celebrating the Eucharist with them made me feel that I was not outside but within the bosom of the Congregation of St. Vincent de Paul. I was with my own brothers who shared the same Vincentian identity, and who struggle like me to live it in the different cultural, economic and political contexts of our Episcopal ministries. As Bishop Alfonso Cabezas said during our recollection, we are all in need of continuous conversion as St. Vincent experienced in Folleville almost 400 years ago.

With the help of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, who helped preserve the Congregation these past 400 years, together with my fellow Vincentian bishops, I continue to trust in the Lord who challenges us to be creative and bold in our episcopal ministry ... to remain faithful to Christ, to the Poor, and to the Church whom we serve with the love of Jesus Christ, evangelizer of the poor.

May

Nominaciones / Confirmaciones

MAVRIC Tomaz	08/05/2015	Vice-Visitor Saints Cyril and Methodius
NOVAK Pavle	08/05/2015	Director DC Slovenia
TECLU Oqbamicael	08/05/2015	Director DC Eritrea

Ordinationes

SAFARI BIGOMBIRE Patient	Sac	Col	25/01/2015
FALCO MATEO Nicolas Alberto	Sac	Arg	10/05/2015
KALISZ Marek Tomasz	Sac	Pol	23/05/2015

Necrologium

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
ZICO Vicente Joaquim	Ep	04/05/2015	Flu	88	72
ADAMSKI Jerzy	Sac	06/05/2015	Pol	70	53
PINTO António Pedro	Sac	06/05/2015	Lus	83	66
SURMA Henryk	Sac	21/05/2015	Pol	78	60
PASZEK Wiktor	Sac	24/05/2015	Pol	83	65
OSTRZOŁEK Henryk	Sac	27/05/2015	Pol	84	65

June

Nominaciones / Confirmaciones

NOVAK Pavle	01/06/2015	Visitor Slovenia (Reconfirmed)
CASADO CASADO Fernando	05/06/2015	Director DC Madrid Saint Vincent (Reconfirmed)
ZEDDE Italo	22/06/2015	Director DC Sardinia (Reconfirmed)

Ordinationes

GUTIÉRREZ ZÚÑIGA Rolando	Sac	Cos	20/06/2015
ZUNGUZE Ernesto Alfredo	Sac	Moz	21/06/2015
DÁVILA AGUILAR José Eduardo	Sac	Aeq	27/06/2015
SISALIMA CASTRO Diego Armando	Sac	Aeq	27/06/2015

Necrologium

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ Segundo	Sac	10/06/2015	Mat	87	69
ROZYCKI* Aloise	Fra	18/06/2015	Cur	73	54
GALARRETA JIMÉNEZ Jesús	Sac	19/06/2015	Cae	68	50
MALLAGHAN* Francis Xavier	Fra	20/06/2015	Orl	78	58
ARGUS* Howard J. (Mark)	Fra	25/06/2015	Occ	87	66