



**CONGREGAZIONE DELLA MISSIONE
CURIA GENERALIZIA**

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SUPERIORE GENERALE

Rome, 24 March 2017

To all the confreres of the Congregation of the Mission

The Vincentian charism, today as in its beginnings, is based on the discernment of the signs of the times, and is expressed in the creativity of its responses. It joins evangelization and charity; preaching with promotion: dimensions of the same missionary action that seeks the salvation of every human person, and of the whole human person, in service of the Kingdom (Final Document, 2016 General Assembly, # 2.4.).

**TEMPO FORTE CIRCULAR
(27 February – 3 March 2017)**

My dear confreres,

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

On Sunday, 26 February 2017, we began the *Tempo Forte* with a time for reflection that was directed by Father Luigi Mezzadri, CM. Father used an icon (painted by the Polish artist, Mariola Zajączkowska-Bicho), which depicts Vincent de Paul as a young man, holding the Bible in one hand and bread in the other. Through means of this icon, Father Mezzadri spoke with us about the beauty and the relevance of our charism.

The remainder of the morning was spent in personal prayer. We concluded this time of reflection with the celebration of the Eucharist, which was presided by Father Shijo Kanjirathamkunnel, CM. Father Shijo took advantage of this time to thank the members of the Curia for their kindness during the three years that he served as Procurator and Postulator General. The following day, 27 February, Father travelled to the Mission in Alaska where he

will now minister. Thank you, Father Shijo, for your ministry at the Curia and may God bless your ministry in Alaska!

Cardinal Franc Rodé, CM, joined us for dinner. It was a fraternal encounter during which we were able to exchange opinions with regard to current Church news and world politics.

DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL CURIA WITH REGARD TO THE CONGREGATION

1. Presentation of Strategies (continued)

During the time of our first *Tempo Forte* (29 September – 10 October 2016), the General Council, in accord with the *Final Document* of the 2016 General Assembly and in accord with the concerns of the Congregation, selected eight objectives or lines of action that we will focus on during the years 2016-2022. The objectives are: initial formation, international missions, confreres in difficult situations, the Vincentian Family, solidarity (*ad intra* of the Congregation), reconfiguration, a sense of belonging to the Congregation of the Mission and our Vincentian identity.

In the following *Tempo Forte* meetings of the General Council, we will look for appropriate strategies in order to move forward with these eight priorities. At this present meeting, we decided on the following strategies:

- In the area of initial formation, Father Javier presented for dialogue a proposal with regard to formation in Europe. Afterwards, we decided to send this proposal to all the Visitors in Europe and ask them to study it. At the same time, CEVIM will study this proposal. The ultimate objective of this is “*to rethink Initial Formation in Europe (Internal Seminary and Major Seminary)*.” Commitment # 4 of CEVIM taken at the 2016 GA, understood in the light of this line of action: “To organize intercultural houses of formation on the interprovincial and intercontinental levels” (2016 GA, 3. Lines of Action and Commitments, 3.2, a). From this proposal, we will establish a dialogue between CEVIM and the General Council in order to develop a plan with regard to initial formation.

At the same time, the Superior General has sent a letter to the presidents of the other Conferences and to their respective Visitors in order to communicate to them the desire of the General Council to enter into dialogue with them about a common project in the area of initial formation and in the area of the formation of formators.

- To promote solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission, Father Miles presented a new proposal, which included suggestions that were made during the previous *Tempo Forte*, especially with regard to the names of persons who could be members of a commission charged with preparing a Solidarity Plan. All the Visitors and provincial councils would then study this Plan in order to arrive at a definitive plan.

- In the area of international missions, Fathers Zeracristos, Aarón, and Mathew presented a first proposal, based on an objective evaluation of the present missions. However, in order to arrive at a true plan, it has to be enriched by themes like the following: sensitization and missionary formation in the provinces; providing greater stability to these missions; written agreements regarding the administration of these missions; relationships among the missionaries and the laity, the bishops, with the missionaries' provinces of origin, with the Superior General and his Council; preparation and formation of new candidates; vocations that began to emerge in these international missions; movement from an international mission to a mission dependent on a Conference or a province, etc. In the next *Tempo Forte*, a new draft of this proposal will be presented in order to arrive at a plan of action that the Council will undertake during the coming years.
- With regard to the priority of confreres in difficult situations, Father Turati's proposal (in draft form) has been enriched and, during the next *Tempo Forte*, this plan of action will be completed.

2. Meeting of New Visitors

This meeting will take place at Casa Maria Immacolata (Via Ezio) from 8-17 January 2018. Currently, there are 14 candidates who ought to participate in this meeting. The Vicar General and the Assistant General, Father Zeracristos, are responsible for developing a draft for this meeting for the next *Tempo Forte* in June.

3. Practical Guides for the Visitor and for the Local Superior

It seems apt to prepare a third edition of *A Practical Guide for the Visitor*. The two previous editions date from 1998 and 2005, respectively. The material proposed for the next New Visitors' Meeting (January 2018), the suggestions that will be made during the meeting, and other observations that have been suggested in the General Council will help prepare this new edition.

Given that there are only a few remaining copies of the *Practical Guide for the Local Superior*, it is planned to revise it and, later, publish a new edition of this *Guide*. The General Council will make the revision. The new edition is expected to be ready for the meeting of new Visitors in January 2018.

OFFICES DEPENDENT ON THE GENERAL CURIA

[1] Father John Rybolt, CM, after a careful examination of our archives and our library, has proposed contracting a lay archivist (full-time) and a librarian (part-time) to organize all these materials in the way that they should be. The Council has endorsed this proposal.

[2] Father Jorge Rodríguez, Director of the Office of Communication, after a meeting with the Vatican's Office of Communication, presented us with an updated plan for

communication. In order to implement this plan, we have a grant that a foundation has promised over the next three years. This support consists of a matching grant. The Superior General will request funds for this from some province.

[3] In order to deal with questions concerning CIF, the Director, Father Andrés Motto, CM, and the Sub-Director, Father Adam Bandura, CM, joined us. They explained to the Council the manner in which CIF has functioned and also presented some suggestions with regard to the present and future operations of CIF.

[4] The Office of Vincentian Solidarity (VSO). Father Gregory Semeniuk, CM, is the new Executive Director of this office as of January 2017. He was at the meeting of the General Council to speak about the activities of the VSO during the past three months. He also presented us with a simpler way of approving projects, presented to the VSO, regarding the international missions. The General Council approved this new method, which consists of evaluating those projects in dialogue with the superior of the respective mission, with the Treasurer General, and with the Assistant General responsible for said mission. This will eliminate the need of having to present these projects to the Superior General and his Council. At the same time, and as proposed by Father Gregory, we approved an additional 50,000 dollars in order to complete an already-approved project for the Province of Nigeria.

[5] Father Guillermo Campuzano, CM, the representative of the Congregation to the United Nations, was also at our meeting. He gave an extensive report on his mission. The Congregation of the Mission has the status of an NGO at the United Nations. Currently, the Vincentian Family has five representatives at the United Nations, with ten employees and five separate budgets. According to Father, the power of the Vincentian Family would be stronger and more effective if there were one representative of the Vincentian Family.

Father Guillermo is attempting to develop an international Vincentian network on behalf of *Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation* (Commitment 3.1.d – *Final Document* 2016 GA). This would be composed of a representative of each Conference of Visitors, the Coordinator of the Commission for the Promotion of *Systemic Change*, the Director of the VSO, the Coordinator of the VFO, and, naturally, the representative of the Congregation at the UN. He also proposes forming another network that would be an international coalition for *advocacy*. The objective of these two suggestions is to develop an efficient information network in the Congregation. These projects will be studied more carefully during the next *Tempo Forte*.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Financial Commission, composed of Mr. Thomas Beck, the Treasurer General, and Fathers Philippe Lamblin, CM, Rafael Eloriaga, CM, and George Shitsukane Busieka, CM, met on Saturday, 25 February 2017 for its annual meeting. On Monday, 27 February, Mr. Thomas Beck, President of the Commission, gave a detailed report to the council, about the work carried out over the two previous days. The Commission decided that, in addition to its

annual meeting, it would have a video conference in the middle of the year; thus two meetings a year: one with everyone physically present and another through video conference.

Other matters presented: criteria and the results obtained from investment strategies, presentation of the 2017 budget, possible formation courses for future Treasurers General, insurance coverage of the Alaska mission by the Western Province of the United States, etc.

The discussion on financial matters concluded with some recommendations for the near future. At the end of this discussion, Father Joseph Geders, CM, made a final recommendation and bid farewell to his mission as Treasurer General. Thank you, Father Geders, for the work done and we wish you the best in your new mission! We welcomed the new Treasurer General, Father Paul Parackal, CM.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

- **Bolivia:** On 1 August, Father Aidan R. Rooney, CM, will conclude his service as superior in the El Alto mission. His replacement is being considered.

Fathers Julio César Villalobos Laos (Province of Peru) and Andreas Medi Wijaya (Province of Indonesia) have spent the last three months in Beni (a multi-nationality department of Bolivia), studying the possibility of establishing a new international mission. Their report indicates positive reasons for opening it. The mission would begin with two missionaries. We will make an appeal to see if other confreres wish to collaborate in this mission.

Father Aarón Gutiérrez, Assistant General, will soon travel to Bolivia in order to meet with all the missionaries and dialogue with them about some themes related to this mission.

- **Angola:** There are currently two confreres ministering there. We hope that very soon there will be a third missionary. Several vocations already have arisen. Bishop Alfonso Cabezas Aristizábal, CM, is very interested in promoting these vocations and collaborating with them from a distance.
- **Punta Arenas (Chile):** On 16 June 2017, Father Ángel Garrido concludes his mission as superior. He has stated that he would like to return to Spain. We are considering the appointment of a new superior, as well as a fourth missionary. When Father Aarón Gutiérrez, Assistant General, visits Bolivia, he will also visit this mission.
- **Alaska:** On 22 May 2017, Father Pedro Nel Delgado, CM, will leave this mission and return to his province (Colombia).

VINCENTIAN FAMILY

Father Aarón Gutiérrez, the delegate of the Superior General to the Vincentian Family, presented some specific guidelines in order to accompany the Vincentian Family in coordination with the Vincentian Family Office in Philadelphia. These guidelines, concretized with the verbs “to inform,” “to motivate,” “to accompany,” and “to participate,” were the object of dialogue in the Council and will guide its work with the Vincentian Family.

The Latin American Council of the Vincentian Family, known as FAVILA, is preparing for a meeting in Cochabamba (Bolivia) and it is expected that all the Latin-American Branches of the Family will participate in this meeting. These meetings are held every three years. The last meeting took place in 2015 in Guatemala.

During the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family (VFEC) on 6-7 January 2017, a megaproject, focused on the homeless, was approved for the whole Family. It is hoped that the project will begin on 1 July, as a way to celebrate our Jubilee Year and is expected to continue at least until 2030, to coincide with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

Father Giuseppe Turati, Coordinator of the Systemic Change Commission, informed the Council about some workshops carried out recently and about perspectives for the future.

CONFERENCES OF VISITORS

On 17-25 February 2017, the Asia-Pacific Visitors’ Conference (APVC) held its annual meeting in Vietnam. The program was quite varied and there was dialogue about the *Final Document* of the last General Assembly, the Vincentian Jubilee Year, and the new evangelization. There was also an opportunity to reflect upon the reality of each one of the provinces of this Conference, as well as upon the international missions of the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

The other Conferences have scheduled their annual meetings for the coming months: the United States (NCV), beginning on 19 April; Europe (CEVIM), from 23-27 April; Africa (COVIAM) from 1-8 May; Latin America (CLAPVI) from 22-29 October. We hope that all the Conferences have fruitful gatherings.

CALENDAR OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

For the next *Tempo Forte*, each member of the General Council will present his plan for the canonical visitations that correspond to him. This will enable the Superior General to plan his visits in coordination with each Assistant.

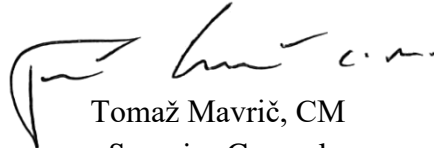
Beginning in June, the ordinary Council meetings will be held – in principle – on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. This will facilitate the Council’s planning.

The Tempo Forte concluded with a brief dialogue on the functioning of the Council itself.

N.B. I would like to make note here of the dialogue between Father David Kinnear, Secretary General of the *Union of Superiors General* (USG) and our Council, on Friday, 3 March 2017. In a wide-ranging exchange, we reflected on the situation of consecrated life today and on the common problems between our Congregation and consecrated life in general.

Lord, Merciful Father, who instilled in Saint Vincent de Paul a great concern for the evangelization of the poor, infuse your Spirit in the hearts of His followers (Prayer for the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian Charism).

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomaž Mavrič, CM'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T' and a long horizontal stroke.

Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General