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2013 MISSION APPEAL

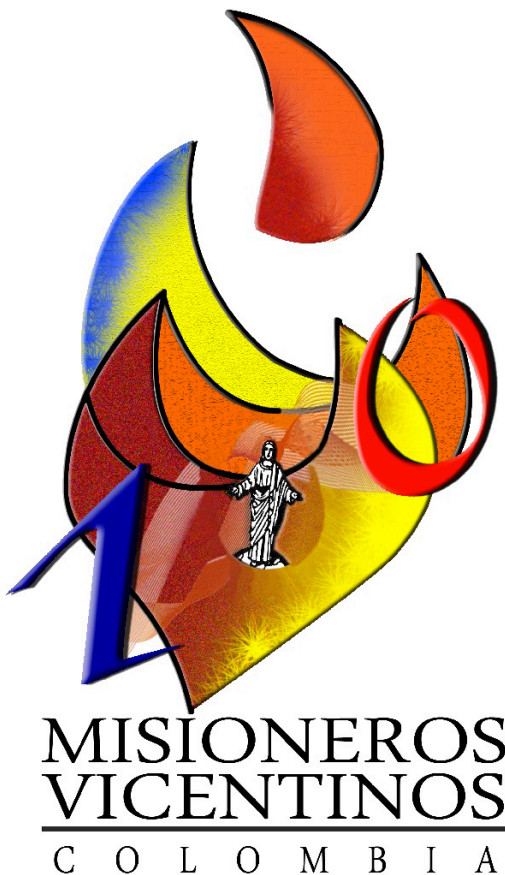
Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be forever in our hearts!

As we enter October, we are reminded by the change of seasons that this once fresh New Year of 2013 is nearing its close. Indeed, both the “Year of Faith” and the annual liturgical year will soon come to an end. However, in October as we also celebrate World Mission Sunday, we are reminded to heed Jesus’ call to go forth and be missionaries. At this time, we recall with awe and affection the lives of the great missionaries in our Church and Congregation. Their stories inspire us to live the mission of Jesus anew by following the way of St. Vincent de Paul.

I want to begin this 2013 Mission Appeal Letter with a missionary story, one that began 143 years ago when two confreres, true to our tradition as Vincentian missionaries, left France to go to a faraway unfamiliar place. On November 9, 1870, Fathers Gustave Foing and Augustine Rieux landed at the Port of Bonaventura in Colombia, South America and began the work of formation of the clergy and parish missions. These brave confreres were the first missionaries in what was then called the Central American Province, stretching from Guatemala to Lima, Peru.

On August 11, 1913, Fr Antonio Fiat, Superior General, at a time of expansion, erected the Province of Colombia, separating it from the Central American Province. At the time of its creation, seven of the ten houses in the Central America Province were in Colombia. In 2013, we celebrate the most visible and lasting effect of these first efforts: the Centenary of the Province of Columbia. They who were once a mission, now send missionaries all over the world. I will say more on this later; but, inspired by their spirit, let us review our “*missions ad gentes.*”



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS: CURRENT NEEDS

Papua New Gwinea

This mission continues to grow. Our confrere, Jacek Tendej from Poland, will soon arrive to be Rector of the seminary for the Archdiocese of Bomana. In addition to seminary formation work, we serve in several dioceses including Port Moresby and Alotau-Sideia, where Rolly Santos, our confrere, serves as bishop. The seminary and Theological Institute in Port Moresby are in need of confreres, as are the parishes and missions. The language is Pidgin English.

Solomon Islands

By the end of 2013, five confreres will have left this mission to return to their native provinces. We are hoping for at least one confrere from Indonesia join in 2014. However with demands of seminary formation work and pastoral and parish ministry, we need confreres to help us continue the good work begun here. With the arrival earlier this year of Fr. Greg Cooney from Australia and Fr. Jose Manjaly from Province of India-South, they join Fr. Twolde Teclemichael, rector of the seminary in Honiara where we serve. They are also awaiting the arrival of Fr. Jeff Harvey from the Western Province, USA. The language is Pidgin English.

Benin

One of our newest missions, this French-speaking mission is served by two Polish confreres, Rafal Brukarczyk and Stanislaw Deszcz. They have been joined by a third confrere, Jaroslaw Lawrenz, also of the Province of Poland who last served in the Province of New England. After much preparation, the confreres are well-established. They engage in pastoral ministry, assist the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, and accompany the Vincentian Family.

Punta Arenas, Chile

This most recently established mission, currently staffed by Fr. Pablo Vargas and Fr. Gerardo Diaz, two confreres from the Province of Chile. They seek another to assist in pastoral ministry to the residents of Punta Arenas and the outlying islands city. Punta Arenas is located in the southernmost part of Chile, adjacent to Tierra del Fuego. The language spoken is Spanish.

NEW MISSIONS

Alaska, USA

Archbishop Roger Schwietz, OMI, the Archdiocese of Fairbanks, Alaska has requested Spanish-speaking confreres to assist in meeting the pastoral needs of the burgeoning immigrant population in that city. The Superior General and Provincial of Colombia are in discussion with the Archdiocese about forming a contract, but other interested confreres are welcome to apply. Alaska is the northernmost of the fifty US states. The languages spoken are English and Spanish.

Beni, Bolivia

We have received a request from a Bishop in Bolivia, Fr. Julio María Elías, OFM who heads the Apostolate Vicariate of Beni. He is requesting 3 confreres (2 priests, 1 brother) to serve a native, indigenous population who are accessible through waterways and by riverboat. The confreres in CLAPVI South are organizing a “popular mission team” to go into this area in 2015 as an interim project to determine the peoples’ spiritual needs, and future possibilities for future missionary outreach. The language spoken is Spanish.

PROVINCIAL MISSIONS: CURRENT NEEDS

Cuba

Although in dialogue with other provinces in the Caribbean about reconfiguration, the Province of Cuba is currently experiencing a major shortage of personnel. The former Visitor, still active in the province, was seriously injured in a recent car accident. This, along with the recent departure of two confreres to their home provinces, and the transfer of another confrere to serve as Director of the Daughters of Charity in their new reconfigured Caribbean Province, have created significant staffing problems for this already small province. The language is Spanish.

Vice Province of Sts. Cyril & Methodius

This Vice-Province has continued to evolve and grow both in numbers of native confreres from the Ukraine, and a focus on finding creative ways to meet the pastoral and material needs of the poor. With ministry in the Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, this vice-province welcomes confreres for short-term ministry as well as new members. The language is Russian.

Vice Province of Mozambique

This Vice-Province has works for the poor along with seminary formation and a mission in South Africa. However, they are still dependent on confreres from other provinces to continue their apostolic outreach. They always welcome new members and the language is Portuguese.

Province of Hungary

This province, while small in number, has one of the youngest groups of confreres in the Congregation. They engage in various types of pastoral work. The language is Hungarian.

Chinese Province

The Province of China continues to serve the pastoral needs of the people of Taiwan and mainland China. Confreres serve in a variety of ministries, and the language is Mandarin.

Province of Paris

The Province of Paris seeks a confrere wishing to engage in pastoral ministry for its Thessaloniki, Greece mission. It is a parish setting and involves serving several diverse language groups who worship at the parish staffed by the confreres. The language spoken is Greek.

UPDATES ON INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

The following is an update on missions we have established from past appeals. These missions are a reality today due to those who volunteered as well as your prayers and donations.

Angola

The Portuguese-speaking mission in Angola has welcomed a third confrere, Fr. Jason Cristan Soto, who is applying for a visa. He joins Frs. Jose Maria Nieto and Jose Ramirez in pastoral work and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family..

Chad

This French-speaking mission in Chad, sponsored by COVIAM, is under the supervision of the Visitor of Nigeria. There are two confreres now stationed there: Fr. Onyeachi Ugwu, from the Province of Nigeria, and Fr. Roch Ramiijaona from the Province of Madagascar. They would like another confrere to assist them in pastoral work and outreach to those in rural areas.

El Alto, Bolivia

The confreres in this mission continue their parish pastoral work and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family. Fr. Aidan Rooney, mission superior, works with Frs. Cyrille Pierre De Nanteuil and Jose Diego Pla Aranda in parish and pastoral work and outreach to the indigenous peoples. They have also fostered a vibrant lay ministry program to empower the three parish centers in their care. Also noteworthy is that due to the planning and foresight of Fr. Aidan Rooney, the mission has supplemented its budget by fund-raising through the internet and by personal contacts. You may view their web site: www.vocesvicentinas.org

Cochabamba, Bolivia

This Bolivian mission is staffed by three Bolivian confreres from the Province of Chile: David Paniagua, Jorge Manrique; and Luis Montoya. They do pastoral work in parish and mission outposts. The mission has found ways to supplement its budget and to be self-sustaining.

Tunis

Fr. Jean-Pierre Mangulu, a confrere from the Province of Congo has arrived to assist Fr. Firmin Mola Mbalo the mission superior. The confreres in this French and English speaking mission do parish ministry, pastoral work, and accompaniment of the Daughters of Charity.

As you can see, the missionary spirit of the Congregation is alive and well, thanks to so many generous confreres who support the missions through volunteering, donations, and prayer. So once again I ask your support in whatever way possible. Attached to this letter, you will find a new feature by the General Council: a listing of necessary criteria to be a missionary. I urge all to read and reflect it, because Jesus and St. Vincent call us to a missionary vocation to build up the Kingdom of God on earth. There is another attachment outlining how a confrere should respond if he wishes to volunteer, along with ways to contribute funds to the VSO for micro-grants. Donations are always welcome, no matter what amount!

As noted, this year the Province of Colombia celebrates its Centenary. From a small start with two French confreres, the Province is now present in the USA, Brazil, Chile, Cuba Ecuador, Papua New Guinea, Toulouse, Rwanda and Burundi bringing Christ and our charism o wherever they are sent. Today, this Province has 25 houses, with 137 confreres and 50 seminarians. They who were once missionary territory have now become missionaries to the world! For this we rejoice, and ask the Lord of the Harvest to send laborers to the harvest.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

G. Gregory Gay CM
Superior General