

7-2000

Letter of the Superior General: October 15, 2000

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Recommended Citation

Maloney, Robert P. C.M. (2000) "Letter of the Superior General: October 15, 2000," *Vincentiana*: Vol. 44: No. 4, Article 5.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vincentiana/vol44/iss4/5>

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October 15, 2000

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission throughout the world

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace and peace of God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Today I am writing, as I do each year, to make an appeal for volunteers to serve in our new international missions as well as to meet other urgent missionary needs.

I am happy to say that we had a resurgence of volunteers over the past year, so that we were able to build up several of our missions with additional personnel. I am deeply grateful to all those who offered their services so generously. I am also very grateful to the Visitors who, often at considerable sacrifice to their home province, encourage confreres in their desire to serve in other places where the needs are so urgent. Besides their help to the international missions, many provinces, both older and newer ones, continue to develop their own long-existing missions *ad gentes* and have also opened new ones. I can only rejoice that the missionary thrust of the Congregation is strong.

Below I offer some news briefs about the missions and then make several appeals.

NEWS BRIEFS ABOUT THE MISSIONS

- **Mozambique** — As I have often written, this vice-province is one of our neediest missions. During the past year Jorge Pedroza, from the Province of Mexico, was named provincial. After consulting the confreres he decided to undertake a complete revision of the works of the province in order to regroup the confreres and to work at strengthening community living within a very busy missionary context. Recently, Miguel Renes, who formerly served as Visitor in Madrid and then as a missionary in Cuba, was assigned here.

Besides the vice-province, **I am also very concerned about the mission in Nacala** which until now has been staffed by the Province of Salamanca. Fr. Manuel Canal continues there bravely, but alone, along with a group of lay volunteers from MISEVI. Nacala is extremely poor and rather isolated. One of our confreres, Germano Grachane, is the bishop of the diocese. Since Salamanca can no longer provide personnel, the Visitor has appealed to me for

help. I would not like to abandon this mission since it is a wonderful missionary setting where the confreres and the lay JMV volunteers have labored nobly. I would be very happy to have volunteers. I have already appealed to the Visitors' Conference of Africa and Madagascar for assistance and am awaiting a response.

- **Solomon Islands** — All of us were shocked at the sudden death of Rafael Sucaldito. While he was waiting in Australia to return to the Solomons, where a civil war had broken out, doctors diagnosed that Ralph had leukemia. He died nine days later. Ralph was an outgoing, energetic, generous confrere who gave most of his life to the formation of the clergy. We will all sorely miss him. Meanwhile, the civil war forced the interruption of studies at the seminary. The students were all sent home. I admire the courage of Marcelo Manimtim and Jack Harris, as well as the sisters who work at the seminary, in remaining there all during the strife, especially since fighting was taking place right around our seminary. As I write, there is a cease fire, which is being rather poorly observed. Marek Owsiak has been assigned to the seminary. Marek is heading for Australia to continue his study of English.
- **China** — Last November, I joined with the confreres of the Province of China in celebrating the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first Vincentian missionaries there. It was a wonderful occasion. A very large number of bishops, priests, brothers, sisters, and lay men and women joined in the Eucharistic celebrations and in conferences that focused on our mission in China both in the past, present, and future. I was also delighted to spend most of one day with the newly established Vincentian Marian Youth groups in Taiwan. These groups have sprung up only recently and have grown rapidly, through the labors of the Daughters of Charity and the confreres. A delegation of young people came from China for the First JMV General Assembly here in Rome this past August.
- **Rwanda and Burundi** — Thanks to the generosity of the Province of Colombia, six confreres have now been assigned to Rwanda and Burundi. Gabriel Naranjo, the Visitor of the Province of Colombia, returned recently from a visit there. He and I spoke at length about conditions in the country, where the poverty is terrible and where the effects of years of violence are still evident. The confreres serving there are very happy. They continue to work at learning both French and the local languages. The people themselves are delighted to have them. The confreres live very simply and maintain a strong community life while serving in various mission stations. They also accompany the Daughters of Charity in both countries.
- **Bolivia** — I am happy to say that we were able to assign two new confreres to the mission there: Franc Pavli_ from Slovenia and Aníbal Vera from Peru. Both already speak Spanish. I hope that, upon their arrival, we can consolidate our community in two centers: El Alto itself and Italaque, from which the

confreres engage in missionary outreach to many villages. It is wonderful to see that we now have a number of Bolivian candidates for the Congregation of the Mission. We have approved plans for the construction of a small residence for our students and a contract has also been drawn up with the Province of Chile which will assist in our students' philosophical and theological formation. From the beginning, the mission in El Alto has not been easy. I am very grateful to the confreres who have served there for their courage and patience.

- **Albania** — In April, Albania was erected as a Region depending on the Province of Naples, but with a contract among the three Italian Visitors with various provisions for maintaining its interprovincial character. A new house of formation was just inaugurated in Scutari. Our young Albanian candidates will live there and will attend the interdiocesan seminary. Fr. Cristoforo Palmieri was named Apostolic Administrator of Rrëshen by the Holy See. The confreres and several communities of Daughters of Charity continue to collaborate generously in pastoral work and assistance to the poor both in Albania and Kosovo.
- **Kharkov, Ukraine** — We have just created a new Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius encompassing the confreres serving in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia. At Kharkov, work continues on the construction of a social and pastoral center. A large group of faithful take part regularly in Sunday Mass. The three confreres have catechetical classes for children, adolescents, and adults. They also offer bible study sessions and prayer groups. Many activities are carried out in collaboration with AIC and Caritas.
- **Siberia** — The confreres on this mission, which will now be part of the Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, communicate with us frequently here in Rome and seem very united and happy. The Daughters of Charity from Slovakia have now arrived to accompany them. The confreres and the Daughters are investigating the possibility of founding an orphanage since there are so many street-children. Another group of Daughters of Charity from Poland went to Kazakhstan.
- **Cuba** — The confreres here continue to serve very generously in difficult circumstances. During the past year it was necessary for Miguel Renes and Alvaro Mauricio Fernández to leave the country. Happily, José María Mondéjar and Francisco Quintero were able to enter. Other confreres go for periods of one to three months to help too. In August, I was delighted that Fr. Jesús María Lusarreta was able to come to the first General Assembly of the JMV with two young lay representatives from Cuba.
- **Tanzania** — Two new confreres, James Kunninpurayidam and Jaimy Moonjely, arrived recently from India to serve in this mission. They have just completed a course in Swahili. Two more have been promised for next year.

Fr. Myles Rearden has finished his generous service to the sisters as spiritual director and has now returned to the Province of Ireland. Jose Manjaly replaced Myles. Fr. Manuel Prado had to leave the mission for health reasons and has returned to the Province of Puerto Rico.

- **Algeria** — Dariusz Górski has now joined François Hiss, Firman Mola Mbalo, and Christian Mauvais in the house in Algiers, which is now an interprovincial house of the two French provinces.
- **Papua New Guinea** — Rolando Santos is going to the seminary there in January as a spiritual director.
- **Haiti** — In response to an appeal from the Visitor of Puerto Rico, we were also able to send two confreres to the mission in Haiti, Jaroslaw Lawrenz and Stanislaw Szczepanik.

FIRST APPEAL

As I mentioned last year, our main priority now in the General Council is to strengthen the missions that we have already begun. We were able to do that in a number of instances over the past year. Only as those missions become consolidated will we attempt to respond to other appeals that we receive from bishops throughout the world. These, as you might imagine, are many.

Some of our most urgent needs at the moment are the following:

- **Mozambique** — Above I described the urgent need we have in the Vice-Province of Mozambique and, to the north, in the mission at Nacala. Few countries have suffered as much as Mozambique. Years of civil war devastated its infrastructures. This year, terrible floods killed many people and wiped out significant resources in the country. The confreres, along with the Daughters of Charity, continue to serve there with courage in spite of these difficulties, but they need help. I am very eager to aid them.
- **Solomon Islands** — Ralph Sucaldito's death left a big gap at the seminary in the Solomons. We would still like to set up a missionary parish there in addition to the seminary. I would be happy to be able to send two more confreres.
- **China** — Several of those teaching English on the mainland have completed their time of service. My visit to the mainland last year impressed on me the importance of this apostolate. The commitment is for one, two, or three years. I would be very grateful to have volunteers.
- **Cuba** — I mentioned above how difficult life still is for the confreres. I just received an urgent appeal from the Visitor asking for two confreres to replace

those who had to leave the country. The names of these confreres would be placed on the waiting list which he must prepare for the government in view of a visa.

- **South Africa** — On the day of the canonization of Francis Regis Clet, I received an appeal from the Holy See asking if we could provide spiritual directors either for the major seminary or for a pre-seminary formation program. The language is English. The commitment is for three years, renewal for another three. Knowing how important the work of the formation of the clergy is in the Vincentian tradition, I would be very happy if we could respond to this appeal.
- **Chad** — Archbishop Charles Vandame from N'Djamena in Chad came to see me and appealed for help in establishing a small mission team in a rural area that has a large Muslim population. French is the basic language of the country, but Arabic is used more and more and there are also many local African languages. The Daughters of Charity from the Province of San Sebastián in Spain have just opened a mission in Chad.
- **Iran** — Lazare de Gérin is alone there. The languages used are French and Persian. I would be delighted if some volunteers could accompany Lazare. Unfortunately, however, it is hard to obtain permission to enter the country.
- **Papua New Guinea** — The Holy See, as well as the bishops of Papua New Guinea, continue to ask me for help in the seminary there. Volunteers could form a team with Rolando Santos who has already been assigned there.
- **Angola** — I would still love to send a few confreres to accompany the Daughters of Charity in this very poor country, where we already have candidates for the Congregation of the Mission (even though we are not yet there!). The bishop has invited us to come. The language is Portuguese.
- **Hungary** — Our little Province of Hungary continues to struggle ahead bravely in spite of limited personnel and meager resources. The elderly Hungarian confreres are more and more limited in what they can do apostolically. The four younger confreres who have arrived from Poland and Slovakia are laboring very hard to restructure the works of the province and renovate houses that suffered abuse and neglect during the long period of oppression. The Visitor asks help in terms of volunteers and economic assistance.

Those are some of our principal needs. I would be very happy if we could send volunteers to meet them. Those interested will find, enclosed, a sheet of instructions with the procedures to be used for volunteering.

SECOND APPEAL

As you know, we are continuing to build up the International Mission Fund, IMF: 2000-2004. The confreres and provinces have been wonderfully generous in contributing to it. This past year, since we were able to use the interest from the Mary Immaculate Seminary International Seminary Fund and, for the first time, from IMF: 2000, the amount of money that we were able to distribute to our missions and poorest provinces increased very significantly.

I am immensely grateful to the provinces and confreres who have now pledged or are already making generous donations to IMF: 2000-2004. This past year several more provinces added their names to the list of regular contributors. This is encouraging not just to me, but to our poor provinces and missions as well. I deeply appreciate these donations.

My appeal is straightforward. I ask you, with as much simplicity as I can, to reflect on whether you as an individual can make a contribution, small or large, to IMF: 2000-2004. I also ask each of the Visitors to discuss with the members of your council whether your province might be able to make a contribution, small or large. I am enclosing a sheet that will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

That is the news and those are my two appeals. Thank you for the wonderful missionary spirit that has been evidenced by the number of volunteers over the past years and by the financial contributions that so many individuals and provinces have made.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

IMF: 2000-2004

METHODS FOR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Provincial Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back. These should be sent to:

Elmer Bauer III, C.M.
Econome General
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

2. For Italy and France, the CCP account can be used following exactly the information in the Catalogue, page 1.
3. Other possibilities for transfers can be discussed with the Econome General.

Individual Contributions

4. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back, sent to the address above.
5. Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Econome, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

In every case:

6. All gifts received will be acknowledged.
7. If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification.
8. Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.

**SOME INFORMATION AND CRITERIA
FOR THOSE WHO WRITE**

9. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter in time to arrive in Rome by December 15, 2000.
10. So that I might read the letters all at once and so that they might be carefully organized, would you please address the envelopes as follows:

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
MISSIONS
Congregazione della Missione
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 ROMA
ITALY

11. It is, of course, helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for the missionaries. Details will vary according to the particular place to which a confrere is sent.
12. While we have decided that no automatic age cutoff would be established, it is surely necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.
13. Confreres who volunteer, by sending a letter to the Superior General, should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will always dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.
14. Your letter should give some background about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests that you have, such as what mission you would like to take part in.
15. Even if you have already written in the past, please contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are available at one moment might not be available at another, and vice-versa.