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Mission Appeal 2002 (Rome, October 15, 2002)

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Rome, October 15, 2002

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

One day, when speaking to the confreres, St. Vincent cried out: “How happy, yes how happy, is the state of that missionary who knows no other boundaries than the whole world for the work and mission he has undertaken for Jesus Christ” (Abelly, Book II, Chapter I, 91).

Few topics excited St. Vincent more than the foreign missions. The reader immediately senses the energy and enthusiasm in his conferences and letters about the missions, as he speaks of Madagascar, Algeria, Poland, Scotland and other places. He weeps at the death of great missionaries, but does not hesitate to send others to replace them. He perseveres even when new beginnings seem to present insurmountable obstacles.

Today I write, as I do each October, to appeal for volunteers for our new missions, as well as for other urgent missionary needs. As usual, I will begin by offering you some news; then I will make several appeals, including some new ones.

SOME NEWS BRIEFS

- ***RATIO MISSIONUM*** — I am delighted with the publication, several months ago, of the *Ratio Missionum (Vincentiana 2002, N°1)* which the General Assembly of 1998 requested, and am very grateful to those who helped in preparing it. I urge all the members of the Congregation to read it and trust that it will be a very useful document, especially for those in formation and for those going off to foreign missions. Several provinces have already used the document as the basis for retreats or ongoing formation sessions.
- **THE VICE-PROVINCE OF STS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS** — I just got back from the first-ever meeting of the members of the new vice-province, which took place in Kiev on September 16-20. It was a wonderful occasion. Almost all the members of the vice-province were there, plus nine students in formation. Also attending were the Visitors of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Four laypersons came from Germany and Italy to represent AIC. Józef Kapu □ciak and I we
General Curia. On this occasion we not only dreamed about the future of

the new vice-province, but also talked concretely about the importance of a healthy, integral spirituality for the individual missionaries, encouraging them to draw up a personal plan that encompasses the human, spiritual, Vincentian-apostolic, community, and ongoing formation dimensions of their lives. Fr. Paul Roche, the Vice-Visitor, has just purchased a house and is adding an addition. This will serve as a Provincial House and Internal Seminary. The province, thanks be to God, has vocations. Recently, four of its students began the Internal Seminary in Slovakia with Fr. Tomaz Mavric as Director.

- **CHINA** — There is good news and bad news here. The bad news is that there was a government crackdown at the end of 2001 that all of us here found very preoccupying. The good news is that things are moving forward on the mainland in positive ways that I had not anticipated. I wish I could fill you in on these developments in greater detail, but I trust that you understand the need for my being vague. Two more volunteers from Poland are joining the mission: Fr. Andrzej Stepa □czuk has alr arrived in Taiwan; Marek Dabrowski, a seminarian, is studying English in Ireland in preparation for the mission. Two confreres from the Philippines have also joined the mission, Ferdinand Labitag and Domingo Seong Doh Hong.
- **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** — Homero Marín has arrived and is adjusting well. Tulio Cordero is at present studying English at St. John's University in New York and will be in Papua New Guinea at the beginning of next year. Political and social conditions in Port Moresby remain turbulent. The confreres bear up under these conditions patiently and courageously.
- **SOLOMON ISLANDS** — In addition to the seminary, the confreres will be taking over the running of a missionary parish. Fr. Chacko Panathara, who along with Fr. Dick Kehoe was a founder of the mission in Tanzania, is presently on sabbatical in the United States. He will arrive in the Solomons at the beginning of 2003 to take over this parish.
- **TANZANIA** — As I mentioned in last year's letter, the Province of Southern India has very generously taken over the responsibility for the mission in Tanzania in order better to guarantee its future. Fr. Mathew Onatt, formerly the Visitor in India, is now the superior of the mission. He arrived in Tanzania this year, as did Varghese Ayyampilly and Babu Mattappillil. There are seven missionaries there at present. Soon, seminarians from India will be going to Tanzania to do their formation there in order to absorb better the local culture and the language, Swahili. The Visitor and Fr. Onatt are eager to build a house of formation in Morogoro and a small new central house in Songea. Of course, the

Province of Southern India has limited financial resources, so they will be searching for funds to start these projects.

- **MOZAMBIQUE**

a. The Vice-Province of Mozambique — I am most grateful to the Visitors of Brazil for taking a special interest in Mozambique. Each of the three Visitors has agreed to send one confrere to the vice-province. The Province of Portugal, likewise, continues to provide confreres for Mozambique, despite its personnel limitations. José Luis Fernandes Azevedo, formerly the National Director of JMV in Portugal and then a military chaplain in Bosnia, has just arrived in Mozambique.

b. Nacala — This year Sergio Asenjo, from Costa Rica, joined José Eugenio López García and David Fernández, both from the Province of Salamanca, and Emmanuel Ugwuoke, from Nigeria, as well as four young lay missionaries (Consuelo Plaza Nieto, María del Carmen Lupiañez Castillo, Silvia Bravo Grau, María Jesús Cuenca Ramos). This mission of the Province of Salamanca has many prospective vocations to the priesthood. The team has been very creative in participating in the Campaign Against Hunger that the worldwide Vincentian Family has mounted over the past year. They have a very interesting, attractive web site, which you can find at: www.nacalavicenciana.org. As I have mentioned in previous letters, malaria is one of our greatest enemies in Mozambique. Just about all of our missionaries have had difficult bouts with it.

- **RWANDA/BURUNDI** — I am very grateful to the Visitor of Colombia and his council, as well as to the many Colombian confreres who have volunteered for this difficult mission. There are now seven confreres there. Things are moving ahead rapidly. The mission in Rwanda/Burundi is now juridically a “region,” with its own superior. The confreres will be opening a house for ten candidates who are interested in joining the Congregation. Another house, to be opened in Rwisabi, where the Daughters of Charity also serve, is in an area with a high percentage of AIDS victims. The confreres in this house may also be able to extend their services to the National Philosophy Seminary, which is nearby. This past year Fenelón Castillo went to Rwanda as Director of the Daughters of Charity. A student from Colombia, Félix Eduardo Osorio, will soon be joining the mission. Other confreres from Colombia will be sent there in the future, so that each house has at least a three-man team.

- **BOLIVIA** — The confreres there now have a new house for the initial formation of their students, who then move on to the seminary in Chile.

Recently they completed a lengthy process of formulating an overall pastoral and community plan.

- **ALBANIA** — Our confrere Cristoforo Palmieri, who is the Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Rrëshen, has just completed the new cathedral for his diocese, where the Congregation began its new mission in 1993. This mission too is now a “region” with a superior who has specified, delegated powers. The Daughters of Charity have also constituted an Albania-Kosovo Region which they hope will soon become a province.
- **CUBA** — Conditions are not easy in Cuba. It remains difficult for foreign confreres to obtain permission to minister there permanently, though recently we have received some encouragement in that regard. Meanwhile, missionaries from Spain, Colombia, Panama, and Santo Domingo help out for short periods of time, as we wait for future developments.
- **IRAN** — Lazare de Gérin continues to work alone here, in very difficult circumstances, in two parishes. Fr. José Antonio Ubillús, Assistant General, visited him there this past April. At present, a young Iranian is making the Internal Seminary in France.

FIRST APPEAL

In the last few years, I have mentioned that our first priority now is to consolidate the new missions that we have already begun, so that they will have firm foundations for the future. Nonetheless, I still receive many appeals, some of which I would love to respond to.

- **ANGOLA** — At table recently in Paris, a young confrere asked me: “Are there any other missions you would like to begin before you finish your mandate as Superior General?” Without much hesitation I answered: “Yes, I would like to begin a new mission in Angola.” I cannot tell you how many times the Mother General, the Visitatrix of Madrid St. Vincent, and other Daughters of Charity have appealed to me to send confreres to accompany the sisters in the mission there. On top of that, we already have candidates for the Congregation of the Mission from Angola! So, my first appeal this year is for Angola. The bishop has invited us to come. The language is Portuguese. Peace seems to have been reestablished, though life conditions are by no means easy. I would love to have at least two volunteers.

- **EQUATORIAL GUINEA** — Our confrere Msgr. Jorge Ávila, after many years as bishop in El Petén and then in Jalapa, Guatemala, is now retired. Having always desired to serve on the missions, he then volunteered to go as a missionary to Equatorial Guinea! He departed on October 4. I can only express my deepest gratitude and thanks to him. He is now accompanying the Daughters of Charity in Equatorial Guinea; they live in an area where there is no other priest. Here too, as in Angola, we already have candidates for the Congregation of the Mission! It would be wonderful to have a couple of volunteers to join Msgr. Ávila there. The language is Spanish. This mission is very poor, with difficult living conditions. Geographically, however, it is not too far from our mission in Cameroon. There are already initial contacts between the two missions.
- **SOLOMON ISLANDS** — We need at least one confrere to accompany Fr. Chacko in the new missionary parish. Since the parish is adjacent to the seminary, there will be abundant contact with the confreres there and cooperation between the seminary and the parish.
- **PAPUA NEW GUINEA** — The Archbishop of Port Moresby keeps asking for more confreres for the interdiocesan formation program at Holy Spirit Seminary. The language at the seminary is English, though among the people Pidgin English is spoken. I do not wish to disguise from you that living conditions are difficult in Papua New Guinea, where there continues to be much violence.
- **VICE-PROVINCE OF STS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS** — The vice-province has 22 confreres spread out over a huge territory in Siberia, Belarus and Ukraine. Will we soon be able to reopen the house that belongs to the Congregation in Lithuania? Will we be able one day to join the sisters in Kazakhstan? This depends, in large part, on volunteers. The official language of the vice-province is Russian. The confreres, who come from Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ireland, made courageous efforts to learn the language.
- **ROMANIA** — Before the Communist takeover, the confreres worked in Romania; in fact, you will still find our house in Bucharest listed in the *Catalogue*, though it does not appear likely that we will get it back. Recently, two Romanian confreres were ordained in the Province of Toulouse. There are several others in formation. The Visitor of the Province of Toulouse has asked me if we could envision the opening of a house in Romania. If such a mission were to be opened, it would be important to have some more experienced confreres to accompany the younger Romanians. The language is Romanian.

- **EL ALTO** — We need at least one more confrere to fill out the team in El Alto, where the confreres serve very generously under difficult climatic conditions, because of the altitude, and in difficult pastoral circumstances. The languages are Spanish and Aymara.

SECOND APPEAL

Provinces continue to be enormously generous in contributing to IMF:2000-2004. Because of depressed market conditions, this fund is not growing as rapidly as its predecessor (IMF:2000) did, but it is doing reasonably well, given the present situation.

Each quarter at a *tempo forte* meeting of the General Council, the Treasurer General makes a report that also includes the contributions that individual confreres have made to IMF:2000-2004. The members of the General Council always express astonishment at how abundant these contributions are. When I made the first appeal several years ago, none of us anticipated how generous the response of individual confreres would be.

Apart from IMF:2000 and IMF:2000-2004, one of my goals in recent years has been to set up patrimonial funds for our poorest provinces. The revenues from such funds, whose capital remains untouched, will help guarantee the future of those provinces and will be used for the formation of their members, their works among the poor, and the care of their aging missionaries. To create such funds, I have appealed to several better-off provinces, who have shown extraordinary generosity in sharing their resources with our poorest provinces.

I am very grateful too to confreres and friends of the Congregation who have, in their wills, left legacies, which are now bearing fruit in the missions. I can only encourage others to do the same. It is a very concrete way of expressing one's love and zeal for the missions, even after one's death.

This year's appeal is like that of other years. I make it with less embarrassment than in the past, since I see how generously you have responded to it. I ask you, with simplicity, 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.

Those are my appeals both for personnel and for financial assistance for the missions. One of the things that most encourages me as Superior General is the wonderful missionary spirit that I see among the confreres, young and old. I thank the Lord for that and ask him to continue to bless the Congregation and to

deepen this spirit among us.

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

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

In every case:

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

Some Information and Criteria for Those Who Write

1. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter in time to arrive in Rome by December 15, 2002.
2. 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
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.