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Vincentiana, July-October 2004

Nuntia and Vincentiana

by Orlando Escobar, C.M.

Editor of Nuntia and Vincentiana

22.VII.2004

I want to thank the members of the Central Commission and all of you for giving me this opportunity to speak briefly to you about the monthly news bulletin of the General Curia, *Nuntia* and the bi-monthly magazine of the Curia, *Vincentiana*.

Since February of 2000, I have been responsible for both of these publications. During these years at the Curia I have had the opportunity and the privilege of coming to know a little better the Congregation of the Mission. Indeed, because of my experience with *Nuntia* and *Vincentiana*, in some way I am a witness today of the vitality of the "Little Company." I have always considered these two publications as an "x-ray" of the missionary dynamism of the confreres and the provinces and also of the Vincentian Family in the world.

As Director of these two publications, I can rely on the invaluable assistance of the Secretariat of the General Curia. The Daughters of Charity who work there are, in reality, responsible for the English and French translations of the text of *Nuntia* which I write in Spanish. They also review the articles of the French and English editions of *Vincentiana* before going to press; that is, they review the articles that are submitted for publication in French and English and/or translated into these languages. I do the same with the articles that are submitted in Spanish and/or translated into Spanish.

One of the Italian secretaries in the Secretariat of the Curia is responsible for the graphics of *Nuntia* and the mailing of *Vincentiana*. I send *Nuntia* to the Visitors by e-mail (a few of the Visitors also receive *Nuntia* by regular mail). I trust that the Visitors then send *Nuntia*, in a timely manner, to each of the houses of the province. It is my hope that these publications are filed and preserved, at least in the Provincial Archives.

When I write *Nuntia*, I am greatly helped by the provincial bulletins that you send me or send to the General Curia. The Superior General, the Assistants, the representative to the Vincentian

Family and other officials of the Curia also send me news of their more important activities — all of which is then made known to you through *Nuntia*. The Secretary General sends me each month the news that appears on the last page of *Nuntia*: appointments of the Superior General, names of those who have been ordained, the brothers who have pronounced vows, and the confreres who have died.

Some of the Visitors, either themselves or through persons they have asked to serve as provincial correspondents, also send me news to be published in *Nuntia*. Some of the news I find on the Vincentian Family website and at times I ask the Visitor directly for news. I would like to have *Nuntia* include more news about Africa and Asia. This is a work where co-responsibility is very important. I am sure that in *The Practical Guide for the Visitor* (nos. 355-359) you will find some simple criteria to appoint a correspondent who could serve as a liaison between the province and *Nuntia* and *Vincentiana*.

A Redaction Committee, composed of Frs. José María Nieto, Rolando DelaGoza, Jean Landousies and myself, is responsible for the publication of *Vincentiana*. This committee represents the different languages in which this magazine is published. We meet two or three times a year to plan and evaluate the publication. By planning a *feature* that will interest the confreres, we try to respond to actual situations of the Congregation in the world.

Vincentiana would not be possible without the help of the translators. Many of them have come as translators to this Assembly and they also include some of the Visitors or delegates who are here and have collaborated most generously with us. Many thanks to you, to all of you! I know that all of you are involved in pastoral work that places great demands on you, and yet you offer some of your free time to collaborate in this “translation ministry,” which is more important than it might appear at first.

During these five years *Vincentiana* has published, among other themes, *features* on the occasion of:

- the 20th anniversary of the approval of our new Constitutions (the theme of this Assembly);
- the 200th anniversary of the birth of St. Justin de Jacobis (1800-1860), the canonization of Francis Regis Clet (1748-1820), the 200th anniversary of the birth of St. John Gabriel Perboyre (1800-1840), and the beatification of Marcantonio Durando (1801-1880);
- the Vincentian Month of 2001 dedicated to the theme of the ministry of the Directors of the Daughters of Charity and that of 2002 on the ministry of the Advisors to the Vincentian Family;

- the meeting of the Visitors (Dublin, 2001), and the Provincial Treasurers (Rome, 2002);
- the new importance of Visitors' Conferences in the Congregation of the Mission (2003), etc.

Vincentiana has also published two important documents: *Ratio Missionum* (2002) and the *Practical Guide for the Local Superior* (2003).

I also take this opportunity to thank the Visitors for the times that you have responded to my invitation to purchase extra copies of specific issues of *Vincentiana*. In this way you have helped to disseminate this publication and at the same time have helped us lower our costs.

Vincentiana has published articles on Vincentian spirituality, on the missions and the apostolates that our confreres have undertaken in various parts of the world, as well as articles about the Vincentian Family; namely, the campaigns against malaria and against hunger. At the same time, the magazine publishes official documents, such as the letters of the Superior General and documents of importance to the Congregation of Mission, such as the message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the ordination of St. Vincent, etc. After this Assembly, *Vincentiana* will publish the presentations and documents that have resulted from this gathering of the confreres.

During this past year, 2004, *Vincentiana* has attempted to highlight the figure of some lesser-known confreres, such as, Guillaume Pouget (1847-1933). In the near future we hope to publish brief profiles of other confreres, such as Joseph Rosati (1790-1843), Peter Schumacher (1839-1902), Georges-Marie Salvaire (1847-1899), Guiseppe Alloatti (1849-1933), José María Alcácer (1899-1994), Tulio Botero Salazar (1904-1981), Aleksander Usowicz (1912-2002). Other confreres also appear on this list such as Vincent Lebbe, Anibale Bugnini, Nico Van Kleef, etc. Indeed, the list could go on and on.

We also want to highlight some important anniversaries in the provinces; for example, the 300th anniversary of the Congregation of the Mission in Spain, the 150th anniversary of the Congregation in Chile and the 80th anniversary of the Congregation in Indonesia. We would like to publish many other "histories" but the space is limited and so we decided to publish one of these events for each continent (at times, of course, there are exceptions). I want to clarify here that *Vincentiana* is not simply interested in "archeology." As we highlight these lesser-known confreres and histories of the Congregation, we do so with the hope of showing their significance for our life and ministry in the present-day world.

In 2006, *Vincentiana* will celebrate its **50th anniversary**. My hope is that during the next six years our publication will be a faithful echo of this General Assembly in that we will dedicate space to the themes of formation and the missions, as well as the pastoral experiences of the confreres throughout the world. We will continue to publish articles on Vincentian spirituality and youth. In a word, *Vincentiana* (and also *Nuntia*) hopes to continue to be an “x-ray” of the Congregation of the Mission today.

Some final data: we print 1,200 copies of a normal edition of *Vincentiana* (500 in Spanish, 400 in English and 300 in French). Eight hundred of these copies are sent to the houses of the Congregation of the Mission, 200 to the Daughters of Charity, individual confreres and lay people, 50 to the different leaders of the Vincentian Family and other copies are sent free. The remaining copies are placed in the archives. I am happy to acknowledge that the hope that was stated here in 1998 by Fr. Amyot d’Inville, the former Secretary General (who was also responsible for the publication of *Nuntia* and *Vincentiana*), namely, that subscriptions to *Vincentiana* would increase, has in fact become a reality. During the past six years subscriptions have risen from 830 to 1,000.

It is also important to highlight here the autonomy of *Vincentiana* and *Nuntia*. Even though these are publications of the General Curia, we have been given the liberty to move forward in our work. In other words, the Director and the Redaction Committee have been given sufficient space and “the ability to maneuver” that allows us to give these publications the orientation that we feel is best. Naturally we have tried to keep in mind the suggestions and the indications that we have received, especially from the General Council.

Some of you have asked me about my pastoral experience during my time here at the General Curia. I have no doubt that my primary pastoral experience has been one of service and contact with the Congregation that has been achieved through these publications which echo the vitality of the provinces. My weekly contact with the community of Sant’Egidio here in Rome has complemented this pastoral experience. This is especially true of the weekly Eucharistic celebration with them. This lay movement has helped me maintain contact with the poor, to place the Word of God in the center of my ministry and to sleep in peace. Again, many thanks.