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Solidarity Project (March 2005)

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GENERAL CURIA

March 2005

My brothers and sisters of the Vincentian Family

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

I would like to share with you an update of the situation in Southern India and the Solidarity Project. Below you will find a report from Fr. Sebastian Anthikad, who is Director of Social Works of the South Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission. On 1 March he sent me the following e-mail:

Greetings from Enikepadu, India. At the outset let me thank you sincerely for all the troubles that you take upon yourself for the victims of Tsunami which encourages us to do more for the poor victims. Please find here below a report on the activities of the members of the South Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission with the victims of Tsunami.

As you know the killer and devastating Tsunami hit the Indian shore in the morning hours of 26th December 2004. Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the two mostly affected states in India. More than 10,000 people died and more than 200,000 dwelling units were completely destroyed, besides innumerable fishing craft and housing utensils and other belongings.

Immediately after the incident confreres from Keralapuram in Kollam district in Kerala and Amminjakarai in Tamil Nadu rushed to the closest affected areas with emergency relief materials and distributed food stuff, cloth and cooking utensils to the people.

The director of social works of the Province visited Kanyakumari village in Tamil Nadu and Azheekal village in Kerala to study the situation with the intention of taking up rehabilitation projects for the affected people of these two villages.

The plan of the Province is to construct 100 houses each in these two villages and supply fishing craft to 200 families in

the same villages. The cost of one house would come to approximately Rs. 1,55,737.00 (\$3621) and a set of fishing craft (which consists of one catamaran, one fishing net and one motor engine) is estimated at Rs. 1,25,000.00 (\$2906). So the total cost of 200 houses and 200 sets of fishing craft alone will cost: Rs. 56,147,400.00 (\$1,305,753). Other expenses like transportation, staff salary and maintenance, energy and water charges, administrative expenses, unforeseen expenses and conveyance to the staff also should be added to the principal expenditure. It would amount 10% (approximately) of the principal expenditure, i.e., Rs. 5,614,740.00 (\$130,575). We hope to get some financial assistance from Malteser, Germany, and Manos Unidas, Spain, but until today they have not made any positive commitment to our request. With the financial help that you have given to us the team members of the rehabilitation programme are going to move to the two villages on the 10th of March. We plan to carry out the following programmes.

- 1 Make a detailed survey (random survey was taken some time back) of these two villages.
2. Organize kindergarten centre for the children between the age group of 4 to 8. The children would be given snack at 9 a.m. and lunch at 12 noon.
3. Offer counseling among the people to get rid of the psychological trauma and the fear the people, especially women and children have until today, due to tsunami from which they have not recovered yet.
4. If any damaged houses could be repaired we are going to take up that project.
5. Awareness-building and consciousness-raising programmes for the affected people, through the means of workshops, kits, street plays etc., are to be conducted.

Our team consists of the Director, one confrere and one regent brother together with four lay staff in each centre. I shall be in touch with you again after 15 March.

So far, there has been a generous response from provinces, as well as individual confreres and other members of the Vincentian Family. Below you can find some information about how you can make a donation for this project, if you would like.

- 1) Check made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back, along with a note saying this money is for the Tsunami Relief Project of the Province of Southern India.

This can be sent to:

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

- 2) Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Treasurer, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

When the project itself is finished, we will send each of the donors a financial report from the General Curia, in order to indicate how your donation was used. The means of communication that we are employing here serves as an update to all the donors at this point in time.

Please continue your prayers for the efforts of the Vincentian Family striving to support the victims of the tsunami in the different countries that were affected. We join our solidarity and prayers as well with the poor in many parts of the world where they have been marginalized and are suffering as a result of natural disasters, war, civil strife, hunger, malaria, AIDS: all those new forms of poverty which continue to be living expressions of the ongoing crucifixion of Jesus Christ today.

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 flourish extending to the left.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General