

Volume 01

Jan – Mar 2012

News Bulletin
of the
Vincentian Family in India



(Edited by Sponsored and Circulated by the SSVP,
National Council in India)

(For Private Circulation only)

Message

St. Vincent de Paul was wonderfully creative in drawing people to work together: clergy, brothers, sisters, lay men and women, young and old, rich and poor. He urged to support one another in the service of the poor and strive for union and peace among ourselves. It is because of this legacy, we as the members of Vincentian Family in India decided to come together. The aim of this unity is to strengthen our relationship as members of one family and thereby collectively campaign for uplifting the unprivileged and underprivileged member of the society.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read, “Now the company of those who believed was of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common....and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them...” (Acts 4: 32). Faith in Jesus Christ strengthened the unity of the members of first Christian community. Their unity promoted them to be generous with those who were needy. Their spirit of generosity paved a way for true equality among them and removed the systems that divided them. And their spirit of equality fortified them to work together for the eradication of poverty which existed in their society. Their efforts were to make a society here on earth where there would be no unprivileged or under privileged member. Let this style of life followed by the first Christian community be our model!

In “Deus Caritas Est”, the first Encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, there is a special invitation to serve the poorest of the poor. His Holiness says, “The Church is God’s family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life” (Deus Caritas Est 25). In our attempt to identify the causes of poverty we come across the catch word of this century ‘systemic change’. In order to promote ‘systemic change’ as evangelizers of the poor, we need to imitate the spirit of the first Christian Community as envisaged in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Vincent recommends us to do the same.

At this juncture, I wish to appreciate and congratulate the major superiors/heads of the various branches of the Vincentian Family in India who understanding the vision and mission of St. Vincent decided to come together to strengthen each other. In the last Annual Gathering of the major superiors/heads of the various branches held at Bangalore, it was proposed to have a news bulletin of VFI. This is a means to share our news and views. It is one of the ways of strengthening our unity and charism.

The first edition of it we are bringing out on March 15, 2012, the feast day of St. Louis de Marillac, one of the close associates of St. Vincent in the work of the evangelization of the poor. While wishing happy feast to each members of the VFI, I invoke the intercession of St. Vincent and all our saints and blessed of VFI for all of us for a better unity and greater collaboration for the causes of the poor.

God bless you.

Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, National Coordinator of VFI

News – Nation capsules

1. Messages of Very Rev. Fr. Gregory G. Gay, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity on the occasion of the 6th General Gathering of the Major superiors and heads of Vincentian Family in India

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December 30, 2012

To
The Vincentian Family Leaders of India.
fputhenthayil@yahoo.co.in

Dear friends in St. Vincent,

The Grace and Peace of the Lord be with you forever!

I am happy to address all of you gathered at the annual gathering of the Leaders of the VF in India. We are passing through an important phase of growth and collaboration in the Vincentian family. On all the continents, the VF is reorganizing and growing stronger. We have a common heritage, legacy, vision and mission inherited from St. Vincent. We share an ethos of loving service of the poor. What unites us is a passionate love for the poor after the manner of St. Vincent. In serving the poor we have much to learn from each other. There is the expressed need of collaboration between different branches of the VF.

The Congregation of the Mission reaffirmed our conviction of the strategy of collaboration, in our General Assembly of 2010, in the words, “*Collaboration is built on respect for the distinctness of mission of each branch and the competence of its leaders.*” (Synthesis Document of the GA 2010, #12.) Our collaboration is not for dominance of one branch over another nor for making of a superstructure, but for coming together in mutual respect for a common cause on a common platform. The aim of the collaboration is twofold: a) that we grow in the heritage, tradition and charism inherited from St. Vincent, by mutual sharing and study, b) that the poor are better served as a revelation of the compassionate love of Christ. I exhort all of you to dialogue, study and discern seriously of the possible ways of achieving these goals. I am aware that there are many branches of the Vincentian Family in India and if they come together the VF can become a formidable force for mutual enrichment and for defending the cause of the poor. I pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in your discernment process and invoke the blessing and grace of God in all your undertakings.

I take this opportunity to inform you that there is a coordinating office of the Vincentian Family set up at the General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission at Rome for several years now. You may contact the office for information and assistance. I have also asked the Assistant Generals of CM to be the link persons between the VF in each continent and the General Curia. Rev. Fr. Varghese Thottamkara C.M. is the assistant for the Asia – Pacific zone. He will be glad to give you whatever assistance needed. I extend to you the cordial wishes of all the members of the General Council of the Congregation of the Mission here in Rome. Be assured of our prayers and support.

United with you in prayer
Fr. G. Gregory Gay C.M.
Superior General
Congregation of the Mission

2. 6th Annual Gathering of the VFI



Participants at 6th National Vincentian Family Meeting held at Bangalore on 21st & 22nd January 2012

The sixth National Vincentian Family Meeting was held at St. Vincent's Seminary in Hallehali, Bangalore from 21.01.2012 and 22.01.2012. It was hosted by the Daughters of Charity of South Indian Province. Understanding the need of the "Systemic Changes" for uplifting the people who are poor and the marginalized, the major superiors and heads of VFI had thought of having an input session on 'systemic changes. Sr. Alice Lukose, Co-founder of WIN Society (a Secular Institute recognized by the Church), who was active in fishermen's struggles in Kerala was the resource person. Her thoughts were inspiring and enriching.

On the following day was the business day. In the evaluation all the participants expressed their happiness of the growth of VFI. There were representation from eleven branches such as from Congregation of the Mission, Vincentian Congregation, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Sisters of Charity of St. Mary, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary, Sisters of Charity, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Association of Miraculous Medal, and Vincentian Marian Youth.

In the said meeting, the special invitation of Very Rev. Fr. Gregory G. Gay was read out. He invited a few projects from VFI which can promote 'systemic change'. All the participants were pleased with invitation of the Superior General of CM and DC. All of the participants unanimously proposed to prepare some common projects for the causes of the poor by the end of April. In view of giving equal importance, each region was asked to prepare the project and send it to the Superior General of CM and DC or to the International Commission for Systemic Changes headed by Rev. Fr. Robert Maloney CM.

The letter of the Very Rev. Fr. Gregory G. Gay as follows:

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Rome, December 15, 2011

Dear Family members,

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

There are many countries throughout the world that have established Vincentian Family Councils. There are other countries where without councils, the members of the Vincentian Family work together in different projects. In a discussion with Father Robert Maloney, C.M., the Coordinator of the Commission for Systemic Change and overall responsible for the start-up money that is awarded for projects in systemic change, we have been given the opportunity to accept projects that are being carried out by members of the Vincentian Family.

If there are projects carried out by Vincentian Family Councils or by three or more of the different members of the Vincentian Family, these projects can be sent to myself as overall responsible for the Vincentian Family. The Vincentian Family Leadership Commission will review these projects and then send them on to the Commission for Systemic Change for possible eligibility for start-up money.

I write this now just as a clarification. Later on when the letters come from the Commission on Systemic Change concerning the start-up money projects, I will send that information. Again I repeat, it is just for projects that are done together by members of the Vincentian Family in the various countries where the Family is established as a Council or three or four members of the Vincentian Family are working together.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

3. Common Formation Programme:

In order to deepen in the Vincentian Spirituality, the major superiors/heads made a decision to have some common formation programme for the members of VFI. Accordingly Rev.Fr.George Ayaloor CM together with his team is requested to organize a formation programme. It is to train the members who can go back and implement what they are trained for. This year it will be conducted on Systemic Change at St.Vincent's Seminary, Hallehalli, Bangalore from 1st May to 5th May. Resource persons and topics have already been finalized. Due to the lack of accommodation only 40 can be accommodated. So each branch can send maximum of five members.

4. Seminar on 'Systemic Changes'.

On 10th of March 2012, Rev. Fr. Robert P. Maloney, the Coordinator of the International Commission for Systemic Changes expressed his willingness to enrich and inspire the members of VFI in India on 'Systemic Changes'. He is coming together with the members of the said commission. It will be held from February 23 to 28, 2013 at Mokama in Bihar. Sisters of Charity of Nazareth have expressed their willingness to host the programme.

5. Sr. Rose Kidengen is reelected as Visitatrix of South Indian Province:

Sr. Rose Kidengen DC was leading the South Indian Province of the Daughters of Charity since last 6 years. Sr. recently announced that Sr. Rose Kidengen is reelected and she will be leading the province another 3 more years. She was one among the first major superiors to dream for Vincentian Family in India. Vincentian Family members express their sincere wishes and prayers for her.

6. Sisters of Charity of Nazareth in India gets new provincial Superiors

Seeing the growth of the number of sisters as well as taking into consideration of the vastness area in India, the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth divided their Province in India into two. Sr.

Sangeetha Aiyathamattam SCN who was leading the Province for last 6 years going to hand over her office to the newly elected Provincial Superiors. Sr. Basanti Lakra SCN is the new Provincial of the Northern India and the head office of the province will be Patna. Sr. Anne Palatty SCN is the new Provincial of South Indian Province and the head office of the Province will be in Bangalore. While thanking the sincere and laudable service of Sr. Sangeetha SCN especially in promoting and strengthening the VFI, we congratulate the newly nominated Provincial Superiors. We invoke God's blessing on them so that they may be able to lead their respective provinces in accordance with the Vincentian Charism.

News - Regions Capsules

1. Andhra Region:

In order to strengthen the VF in Andhra region, it was divided into six zones. Regular meetings are arranged and attempt is on to bring very healthy relationship between the members of various branches present in the region. Recently the region also conducted a formation programme for its members and Fr. Joseph Erambil VC, a leading competent person in Vincentian Spirituality was invited to give input session. The participants were inspired by his spiritual sharing.

Appeal

This is the first edition of our News Bulletin. Kindly send your comments and suggestion to the editor for the improvement of the quality of our Bulletin. Our Bulletin will be consisting of 6 pages of A4 size. We are intending to divide the column in this manner: editorial board, an article/life of a saint/blessed of the VF, News from the National level and News from regional/zonal level. Anything that promotes VFI and any solid work for the poorest of the poor by the members of VFI could be sent as news. Due to the scarcity of the pages, we request you to prepare the news as brief as possible. We also appeal all the Regional coordinators to send the news in the following months: February for the 1st Quarter; May for the 2nd Quarter; August for the 3rd Quarter and November for the 4th Quarter

