



# Vinfam India



## *News Bulletin of the Vincentian Family in India*

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### MESSAGE

Once again we are blessed with an opportune to celebrate the most joyful feast 'The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ'. The feast commemorates the holy birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the fullness of time God had sent His only begotten Son to this world (Jn 3:16) so that all those who believe in Him shall have eternal life (Jn 1: 12). While contemplating the manifestation of Divine love during this season, I wish to highlight one of the strategies which God had used for the work of redemption - God sought the collaboration of many: The prophets of the Old Testament predicted the advent of the Messiah, preparing the People of God spiritually to await for that DAY (Hb 1: 1). The young virgin of Nazareth, graciously accepted the Divine plan of bearing Christ in her womb (Lk 1: 38). St. Joseph humbly accepted on being the role of Emmanuel's foster father (Mt 1: 24) . The angels joyfully conveyed the good tidings through their celestial symphony (Lk 2: 9ff). The shepherds tending their folk at Bethlehem began to propagate the Good News of the nativity of the Eternal Shepherd to whomever they met (Lk 2: 8, 16ff). The Magi from the far East made a long striding to locate and acknowledge the Epiphany of God, the King of the Kings (Mt 2: 1ff) etc. Everyone according to their

strength, call and capacity, contributed to the realization of the Divine Project of Salvation. God proposes the importance of collaboration and Networking. For us human beings also, this strategy which the Divine Wisdom applied is relevant for the completion of any task with perfection. Indeed, it is the need of the time.

St. Vincent de Paul, the Father of the Poor, learning from the Divine Wisdom, tried to implement the same strategies which the Almighty had deployed for the work of redemption. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in France the needs of the poor were enormous and the cries of the poor were so loud. In order to respond and to empower the poor to realize the Kingdom of God in their lives St. Vincent understood the urgent need of changing his own mind set up. He learned to be altruistic and generous. His genuine conversion prepared him to be a committed evangeliser of the poor. He was fully convinced that, if left alone he may not be able to serve the poor with effective and contagious love. Moreover, he was amazingly clever in networking with the people or agencies which have similar dream or vision of liberating the poorest of the poor and the needy. He was exceptionally creative in drawing people to work together: clergy, brothers, sisters, lay men and women, young and old, rich

and poor, he could co-ordinate them together and eke out the best results from their cooperation. Besides, he urged everybody to support one another in the service of the poor. It is because of this collaboration he could bring about liberation effectively in the society where he lived in.

This unique legacy is beckoning us to come together in this mission of liberating the poorest of the poor. In India, we are vulnerable to have various natural as well as man-made calamities and disasters. One of the typical examples is the total devastation in the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha lashed by the super cyclone Phylin. Such occasions, the vast majority of the worst affected victims are the poor. During and after these types of strange and uncontrollable events, the poor become poorer and marginalised again. At the advent of these types of catastrophe, in the pretext of saving the victims, many promises are made by the public and private agencies which often remain solely on words. As members of the Vincentian Family we should go beyond such approaches and we should be committed to fulfil the promises in a concrete manner. The time has ripened for collaboration and networking with other persons and organisations having similar motto and vision. Hence

Hence as members of one family we may come together for effective launching of the liberating activities for the poor. Accompanying the footsteps of Jesus Christ and St. Vincent de Paul, let us join our hands together for this noble task. Our coming together will certainly strengthen our relationship as members of one family and will

motivate us to have collaborative and participative response and collective actions to campaign for uplifting the unfortunate from the abyss of this great tragedy.

While wishing you a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year, I wish that, like Jesus Christ who showed his human face on the first

Christmas, we too may show our human face at the poor and thereby giving them the opportunity of experiencing their genuine and deep filial bonds under their common divine parent.

**Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, CM**  
**National Coordinator, VFI**

## **NEWS - NATION**

### **A New Vincentian Bishop for the Diocese of Balasore**

The Holy Father Francis appointed Fr. Simon Kaipuram CM from the Province of North India, as Bishop of Balasore, Odisha on 9th December, 2013. Until now he has been the rector of Aquinas College, Gopalpur-on-Sea (Ganjam Dt., Odisha), the philosophical College of the North Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission. Bishop-elect Simon Kaipuram, 60,

was born in Thanneermukam (Alleppey Dt., Kerala). He joined the Congregation of the Mission in the year 1975 and was ordained priest in the year 1980. He holds a licentiate degree in Sacred Scripture (Biblicum, Rome) and Doctorate degree in Biblical Theology (Gregorian University, Rome). He served in teaching ministry in the various major seminaries in India for last 20 years. He was also the coordinator

of the Formation Programme of the Vincentian Family in India.

The Episcopal ordination of Bishop-elect Simon Kaipuram will be on 30th January 2014 at the Cathedral Church, Balasore. Archbishop Salvatore Pennachio, the Apostolic Nuncio to India will be the Chief Consecrator. Vincentian Family in India expresses sincere congratulations and prayerful wishes to him.

## **SYSTEMIC CHANGE COMMISSION IN INDIA**

### **Report of the first meeting of the Commission**

The first meeting of the National Commission for Systemic Change was held on 24th November 2013, at St. Vincent's Provincial House, Bangalore. The meeting began with a prayer song by Sr. Grace SCV followed by welcome note and introducing every member of the forum by Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, the National Coordinator for the Vincentian Family. A special welcome was given to Fr. Mathew Onatt CM, the new Visitor of South Indian Province and to Sr. Ann Palatty SCN, the Provincial Superior of Bangalore. The members of the commission are the following: Fr. Davis Kachapilly CM, Bro. Joseph Pandian SSVP (One of the Territorial Vice-Presidents of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul), Sr. Manisha Azhakathu SCN, Sr. Mary Saleena

Thottam DC and Sr. Gracy SCV. Sr. Manisha SCN was not present for the meeting. As the customary procedure of the meeting, Fr. Francis suggested the commission to have a President and Secretary for the commission. Therefore, the members of the Commission proposed T. Joseph Pandian SSVP, to be the Coordinator and Fr. Davis Kachapilly CM, the Secretary of the National Commission for Systemic Change. It was unanimously approved by the members of the commission. Fr. Mathew Onatt CM, the Visitor of the South Indian Province was requested to moderate the session which he accepted gladly and shared with the members the relevance of applying the concept of systemic change to all our activities.

### **The Purpose of the Commission**

Based on the letter written by Fr. Robert Maloney CM, to the members of the commission Fr. Francis highlighted the immediate need for disseminating the concept of systemic change to every strata of Vincentian Family. Therefore, it is very essential for the commission as a team to plan and organize seminars and workshops more effectively so as to reach this concept of systemic change even to the grass root level. To make this plan a concrete reality the members of the Commission came up with many strategic ideas and suggestions which would serve as a road map to materialize the vision and mission of the commission more effectively.

### **Action plan (Modus Operandi)**

- To have networking and tie up with the International Commission for Systemic Change and other existing commissions and groups
- The members of the commission are to be well equipped and empowered to disseminate the concept of systemic change
- A model project for systemic change has to be prepared and implemented
- Success stories are to be shared in the presentations
- Simplify the strategy according to the situation of the people and the area
- Modules are to be prepared by the members
- Adopt and implement a systemic project in the Indian context
- Regional groups are to be formed and the workshops are to be conducted in each region
- Organize Zonal level meetings
- Concrete proposals are to be prepared to address the problems of the victims of natural calamities
- Identify and empower the competent and promising members from

the regional groups who will champion the concept of systemic change

- Resource persons are to be invited to contribute their share
- The commission should target the youth and get them involved in the systemic projects
- Lay groups and associations are to be encouraged to be the part of systemic change groups
- Forming groups, preparing and sharing news letter, making use of the website and reading and recommending the book 'Seeds of Hope' compiled by Fr. Robert Maloney.
- These are the suggestions and proposals of the National Commission for systemic Change in order to disseminate the concept of systemic change more powerfully to everyone and employ this concept to all our activities.

### **General Suggestions**

- ❖ A proposal was made in the meeting to have an office for the Vincentian Family in Mysore. Fr. Mathew Onatt CM, the Visitor of the South Indian Province has

consented to work out the possibility of getting a plot of land in Mysore for the same purpose.

- ❖ To plan out a Systemic project for the victims of natural calamities in Orissa
- ❖ The Commission should have a long term planning to respond and assist the victims of natural calamities in any situation
- ❖ The venue for the next meeting of the Commission was proposed to be in Angamaly, Kerala on 6th January 2014

The first meeting of the commission for systemic change came to its conclusion with the vote of thanks proposed by Bro. T. Joseph Pandian and a final blessing from Fr. Mathew Onatt CM. At 4 p.m., the gathering was dispersed after tea. The participants expressed their sincere gratitude to Sr. Rose Kidangen, the Visitatrice of the Daughters of Charity and all other sisters of St. Vincent's Community Bangalore for their hospitality, delicious meals and accommodation.

**Fr. Davis Kachappilly CM**

**Secretary**

**National Commission for Systemic Change**

## **NEWS – FROM THE FAMILY BRANCHES**

### **1. CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION- North Indian Province: Seminar on Systemic change**

Realizing the importance and relevance of the Systemic Change strategies, the North Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission, has conducted one-day seminars for the members on 10th October 2013 and 10th November 2013. The resource persons were from the members of the Systemic Change commission of the Province. During the evaluation the members expressed their satisfaction on learning the strategies of Systemic Change. It has widened their horizon of understanding and gave them new and relevant tools to work effectively for the uplifting the poor and the needy.

### **2. SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NAZARETH- Patna Province: Towards Systemic Change...**

Giving emphasis to systemic change among all their ministries, the Sisters of SCN Patna Province engaged in social action and health ministries gathered at Mokama in December 2013 to assess the effectiveness of their actions reflecting upon their vision, mission and goals.

In the health care field, they stressed the importance of building up the total health for the people rather than giving out medicines only to cure the sick.

The Provincial, Sister Basanti Lakra, gently but firmly highlighted the vision of Jesus: Establishment of the reign of

God, and the mission of Jesus-individual and social transformation. The vision and the mission of the disciples of Jesus, is the same today. The objectives can be changed in response to the challenges and the situations of the present day. She challenged the members to respond in word and deed to this call: "What we are asked today is not so much to speak about Christ/God but to let Christ act in us. Contemplation in action is the means which helps us to let Christ act in us to bring about the reign of God. Activities have to take new forms."

The members of the health ministry have been encouraged to register the

SCN Health Centres along with other groups under the Clinical Establishment Act 2012, (CEA) both in Jharkhand and Bihar.

The Sisters affirmed that each place has one common mission. With one vision, everyone can work towards accomplishing that one common mission. It is suggested that the social and health ministry personnel get acquainted with each other's work and wherever possible to incorporate both the ministries. The Sisters are encouraged to update themselves with short-term courses.

The evaluation reports, from every centre, unanimously pointed out noteworthy experiences they got from the people. They said, "Nobody will be able to give us the compassionate care that the sisters give." People are also using herbal and other alternative systems of medicines.

There is a trend that the sick return to the Sisters to get the medical attention that they need after going from hospital to hospital. The patients say that they can trust the Sisters and feel safe in their hands.

Sister Marcelline Indwar, SCN, said, "Today we who work among the poor speak more and more of the need for systemic change. Our General Assembly 2013 has urged us to take on this type of challenges. Hence, once again, we as a group tried to

understand this concept and how to apply it to our local situation. Inputs shared by the Vincentian Family Team in February 2013 shed light on this topic."

The Sisters made systemic change the cross cutting theme in all their ministries. It was proposed to take two units as a model to implement programs for systemic change. The members are committed to take up the challenges of integrated approach through innovation, collaboration and net-working.

The Sisters are to become blessings in a beatitudinal way. Disciples are bound to face persecution and suffering. Sister Basanti asked the members, "Are we, as the disciples of Christ, strong in our faith to suffer for the sake of righteousness?"

One of the success stories shared by Sister Lilly Thomas, a nurse at Bakhtiarpur Community Health Centre: Saheli Self Help Group is in Ragopur village is situated near the low lying railway track. The drainage water of the market flows through their land and because of this, their mud huts collapse time and again. Once they formed their group, they identified this as one of their major problems. The people were constantly sick. Out of necessity, the group was motivated to take action to stop the flow of dirty water through their land in order to free themselves from sickness and to save their mud huts from destruction very often. After several

meetings, the women closed the drainage at the entry point to their land and the water began to flow through the land of the Rajputs, the upper castes. The Rajputs did not take it lightly. They fought with the women with verbal abuses. Since the women did not back off, the Rajputs filed a first information report against them at the local police station. The policemen who went for the spot investigation were in favour of the women's action. The case was then referred to the Block Development Officer, (BDO).

Without relenting, the women approached the BDO. Both the BDO and the Circle Officer, after observing the situation, made a provision to divert the water to the Ganges through pipes. The women were happy with the outcome and they were encouraged to solve other local problems.

Through the service of the Bakhtiarpur Health Centre and outreach programs, SCNs are committed to care for women and children. Sister Lilly said, "We still need to explore possibilities of innovative and need-based programs to involve the society at large to bring about social transformation. We would like to create a society where each one would be proud of being a citizen of India, living in peace, getting his/her due rights, good education and financial security."

**Sr.Malini Manjoly, SCN**

### **3. VINCENTIAN MARIAN YOUTH – India**

**Fr. Bimol Joseph Singh CM passed away**  
It was a shocking news for the members of the Association of the Vincentian Marian Youth (VMY) that Fr. Bimol Joseph Singh CM is no more. He was a member of the North Indian Province of the Congregation of the Mission. In the month of June 2013, Very Rev. Gregory Gay CM, the Director General of VMY ap-

pointed him as National Animator for VMY. Under his direction VMY is heading towards organizing the Association systematically. Unfortunately he fell sick and he was getting treatment from the Christian Hospital, Berhampur in the second week of December, 2013. Meanwhile he was diagnosed to be suffering with Malaria, typhoid and Jaundice. So he was taken to St. Joseph's

Hospital, Visakhapatnam, where the doctors detected him of having the multi organs failure due to a strange virus. In spite of providing the best medication possible, he was succumbed to death on December 20, 2013. He was buried at the Parish Cemetery of Gopalpur on the following day. His absence is irreplaceable lose for us. May his soul rest in peace.