



Vinfam India



News Bulletin of the Vincentian Family in India

Volume : 14

(For Private circulation among members only)

April - June - 2015

MESSAGE

VINCENTIAN FAMILY: YEAR OF COLLABORATION

In a very short span of time, the language of Collaborative Action has gained a very wide hold over the Vincentian Family, worldwide. Collaboration is nothing new. However, it is becoming increasingly important in the modern world, as the cry of the poor is louder than ever around the globe. A Vincentian member or a branch alone may not be able to respond to the cry of the poor in an adequate and sustainable manner. On the other hand by collaborating with others our project will be more successful than it might otherwise be. Therefore, collaboration is indispensable.

Bible in various places highlights the need of collaboration. Bible recommends collaboration because of the fact that man is: a social being (Eccl 4: 9); a part of the Mystical Body of Christ (I Cor 12: 27; I Cor 6:15); weak and frail (I Cor 12: 30ff; Eph 4: 16); in need of encouragement and support as he makes his pilgrim journey on earth (Phil 2:1-30; Rom 15:5-6; Prov 11: 14); not complete by himself (Gen 2: 18) etc. Moreover, Jesus' final prayer for the world was for unity and collaboration (Jn 17:20-23).

St. Vincent de Paul had a profound impact during his lifetime because of his collaborative endeavour. He transformed the way social service was practiced in Europe. His compatriots respected him so much, and so they called him *Pere de la patri* (*Father of the country*). He did this as a man of strategy and action, as a leader and collaborator.

When he came into contact with the poor and suffering of both urban and rural France, he gave all his attention to their liberation. He understood that left alone his charitable works will not be sustainable and will not bring any durable effect. He was wonderfully creative in drawing people to work together to empower the poor: clergy, brothers, sisters, lay men and women, young and old, rich and poor. The foundations of a lay organization, known as the Ladies of Charity, to serve the poor in towns and villages throughout

France in 1617, a clerical society known as the Congregation of the Mission/ priests of the mission dedicated to serve the poor in the countryside in 1625, the Daughters of Charity, a community of sisters dedicated to serve the sick at home or in hospitals, to shelter the homeless, abandoned children, and babies, and to open schools in 1633 etc. are concrete examples of his collaboration. His legacy carries on today in organizations he had founded and inspired. Let us replicate what he had done and taught for empowering the poor.

Understanding the urgent need of collaboration, Very Rev. Gregory G. Gay CM, the General Coordinator of Vincentian Family has called for A YEAR OF COLLABORATION. The main goal of this year of collaboration is to search more innovative ways to engage the branches of the Vincentian family and encourage them to work together on global, national, regional, zonal and local levels to transform the lives of those living in poverty.

The year of collaboration had commenced on the Pentecost Sunday of 2015. The year will be concluded on the Pentecost Sunday of 2016. The theme is ***“Together in Christ we Vincentians make a Difference”***. There are three components to the events for this year- **CELEBRATE, CONNECT and LEARN, AND SERVE with** one another.

A. Celebrate:

Fr. Gregory proposes three special days for celebration. Each day is with a specific purpose: May 24, 2015 (Pentecost) – a day for thanking God for the gift of Vincentian Charism; September 27, 2015 (feast of St. Vincent de Paul) – to reflect deeply about the Vincentian Charism; and May 15, 2016 (Pentecost) – to explore the possibility for common action in favour of the poor.

B. Connect and learn:

By proposing this, Fr. Gregory calls us to discover more about our Vincentian Family, especially those branches that are not well known internationally. Learning more about each other will create a better environment for collaboration.

During this year, we are called to highlight a branch of the Vincentian Family and thus get to learn more about each other. At the same time we are exhorted to publish stories of collaboration, highlighting how the Vincentian Family is working together.

C. Serve with another:

Fr. Gregory calls us to explore the possibility to serve the poor in a collaborative manner.

So let us welcome this Year of Collaboration whole heartedly. May the good Lord arouse our charism and enable us to commit ourselves fully for the task for which we are called. Let the three components of this year of Collaboration - Celebrate, Connect and Learn, and Serve could pave way for a deeper partnership which will facilitate effectively the evangelization of the poor by word and deed.

Dear members of the Vincentian Family in India, while wishing you all a meaningful observation of the year of collaboration, I appeal all the members of Vincentian Family in India to join our hands together for the noble cause of changing the situation of the poor and thereby to promote a human family where justice and peace shall reign (2 Pet 3:13).

Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM
Coordinator of Vincentian Family in India

NEWS – NATION

National Seminar: Vincentian Family Collaboration Action Programme (April 27 to May 1, 2015 at St. Vincent’s Seminary, Bangalore)

The National Vincentian Formation Team together with the International Vincentian Family Collaboration team has organized a summer formation program for the members of the Vincentian Family in India from 27th April to 1st May, 2015 at St. Vincent Seminary, Bangalore.



Participants of VFCAP 2015, St. Vincent’s Seminary of DC, Bangalore

The activities of the Program kicked off with formal Registration. After a word of welcome and brief introduction, to invoke the blessings of God Almighty, a beautiful and eye-catching Prayer Dance was presented by the inmates of St. Vincent’s seminary. Rev. Fr. Shajan Pudussery welcomed the gathering. In the presence of Rev. Fr. Joe Agostino and Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil CM, Sr. Rose Chirayil DC, the Visitatrice of South Indian Province of DC inaugurated the seminar by lighting the lamp. Sr. Rose in her inaugural address highlighted the advantages of Collaboration and congratulated its organizers. Fr. Joe Agostino explained in brief the 5 Modules to be covered during the seminar and the purpose of this formation program. The following were the modules presented during the seminar:

1. A Vincentian is a Visionary - Re-Awakening (Fr. Shajan Pudussery)
2. A Vincentian is a Contemplator - Re-Rooting (Fr. Francis Puthenthayil)
3. A Vincentian is a Collaborator - Re-Discovering (Fr. Joe Agostino)
4. Vincentian is a catalyst - Re-Igniting (Fr. Joy Thuruthel)
5. Vincentian is a Servant - Re-Imagining (Fr. Joe Agostino)

The Evaluation session determined the degree to which the participants have acquired the knowledge and skills and expressed great satisfaction. The concluding Holy Mass was an experience of spiritual ecstasy, presided over by Rev. Fr. Joe Augostino and concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil, Rev. Fr. Shajan Puthussery and Rev. Fr. Joy Thuruthel. The formal Vote of Thanks was proposed by Br. Tomy Varghese, SSVP on behalf of all participants. The participants were grateful to God Almighty, the Planners, Organisers and Meritorious Resource Persons.

Bro. Tomy Varghese SSVP

Earthquake in Nepal





The national crisis caused by the earthquake of April 25 has pushed seven hundred thousand people to poverty in Nepal. As per the Human Development Report (2014) poverty prevalence in Nepal is 23.8 percent. The National Planning Commission is afraid that this poverty level is expected to go up 3.5 percent.

It's not just the poverty level that has increased but the mental health of the people is badly affected in many places. People are still reeling under intense fear and anxiety. Psychiatrists are of the opinion that people are struggling to live a normal life. For some, the condition has exacerbated to mental illness.

A large number of people have suffered multiple losses, combined with physical exposure to danger and are now without resources. People have been terrified by the initial quake and continue to suffer acute anxiety with continuing aftershocks. The two major quakes on April 25 and May 12 killed over 9000 people and destroyed more than 500,000 homes, affecting an estimated 2.8 million people across Nepal, reported a national daily, Kathmandu Post. The National Seismological Centre so far recorded 326 aftershocks, measuring above 4 magnitude.

SCN Sisters and Relief Works

Given the above scenario, SCN Sisters continue to give psychosocial support to people especially women and children through various programs. They organized special psychosocial counseling training with the help of experts for the teachers, staff and volunteers to help themselves and the people. Risking their lives, SCN Sisters visited the people from April 25 itself. The Sisters have completed distributing tin sheets and corn seeds for 302 families in six villages after meeting the immediate needs such as food items, water, tarpaulins, hygiene kits and blankets. Most of the people have been able to put up temporary shelters.



In many of the villages, SCNs were the first ones to reach with relief materials. With the help of international non-profit government organizations, (INGO) Sisters have set up three child-friendly spaces. One in Kathmandu city and two are in Koshidekha area in Kavre district, one of the worst affected places. SCNs in Nepal continue to work in collaboration with other INGOs and NGOs for bringing relief to the survivors of the great quake.

There are still areas no help has reached yet. People in some of the areas were restless and demanding which reminded us of what St. Vincent de Paul said that the poor are our masters. We had to heed to their demands. We are only instruments in the hands of God to meet the needs of our people. And we feel the presence and support of our SCN Family, Vincentian Family and friends with whose support we are carrying on the same work that St. Vincent did during his lifetime.

Sister Malini Manjoly, SCN

SSVP and Relief works

SSVP members from India etc are already extending their service to bring relief to the victims.





Anyone is interested to join in this campaign to solace the earthquake victims may kindly contact Bro. Joseph Pandian SSVP, International Territorial Vice President (09443007795; e-mail: josephpandian@hotmail.com) or Sr. Basanti SCN, the Provincial of Patna (09431024354; e-mail: basantiscn@hotmail.com).

Let us feel proud of our Vincentian brothers and sisters who are with the victims and doing the best possible to bring relief for the suffering. Let us join our hands with them.

NEWS – REGIONAL

Karnataka Region **Strengthening lay associations**

As a response to the call of the Year of Collaboration, Karnataka Region is trying to strengthen the lay associations especially SSVP. There were only two conferences in the diocese of Mysore. As a first step of collaboration, the Karnataka region thought of establishing conferences of SSVP in the various parishes of the Mysore Diocese. Together with the Central Council of Bangalore, the CM South Indian Province had organized a one day seminar on May 14, 2015, for all those interested to join SSVP. Within this short span of time 4 new conferences are established in various parishes of the diocese of Mysore. Karnataka Region is exploring the possibilities for better collaboration at the grass root level.

Fr. Devasia Pudussery CM

Eastern Region **Meeting of the representatives of VF present in the region**

Sr. Grace Moolan DC, the regional coordinator of Eastern Region called for a meeting of the representatives of VF present in the region. The representatives of CM, DC and

SSVP were present. The meeting was held on May 10, 2015 at the Provincial House of DC in Berhampur. Rev. Fr. Francis Puthenthayil updated the members with latest status of Vincentian Family in India. At the end the region was divided into five zones: Berhampur, Rayagada, Bhubaneswar, Balasore and Kolkotta. Rev. Fr. Francis Kannanpuzha, Rev. Fr. Joseph Palayoor, Sr. Mary Madathimali, Rev. Fr. Ajay Lakra and Rev. Fr. Peter Pradhan were named as the coordinators of these zones respectively.

Western Region

Care of the orphan children of HIV positive: An example of Collaboration



It is many years since the Daughters of Charity and SSVP members are collaborating together to care the HIV/AIDS patients. The social stigma and isolation augments their agony to such a terrible situation. A Care Centre named Niramay Niketan at Trombay was opened to welcome these patients. Many patients have died leaving their children unattended. To take care of these children another Home named Karuna Care Center was opened at Manmad. With the help of Central council of Mumbai, the Daughters of Charity are caring these children and facilitate them to live with dignity and respect. At present there are 20 children both boys and girls together. With the tireless effort of Bro. Eugene Das SSVP, the President of Marol Conference and Founder of WWH (We Will Help) Foundation, these children are admitted in the school. This project is made viable only through the collaboration of SSVP and DC.

Sr. Teresa Pagado DC

NEWS – BRANCHES OF VFI

DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY (DC)

New General Team

Nearly 200 Sisters (General Council, Visitatrices and Delegates of the Daughters of Charity), belonging to 78 Provinces spread in 93 countries, had gathered for the 9th General Assembly, which was held at the Motherhouse in Paris from 20 May to 22 June, 2015. The Assembly tried to explore the theme “The boldness of Charity for New

Missionary Momentum”. The Assembly also elected the new General team. Sr. Kathleen Applar from USA is elected as the new Superioress General on May 25, 2015. She was born on 23rd February 1952 in USA. In the beginning, she was teaching in the elementary school of the daughters of Charity. Later she had served as the sister-servant of the community-cum-principle of the same school. Then she served as the provincial councilor and became Visitratrice of St. Louise province, USA in 2008. In June 2009 she was elected as the English Speaking General Councilor for a six year term. Sr. Kathleen Applar served as the General Councilor of the 5 provinces of USA, Provinces of Great Britain, Ireland and Australia. Sr. Kathleen Applar will be assisted by the following eight councilors from the five continents: Sr. Corinna, Sr. Neghesti, Sr. Teresa, Sr. Hanna, Sr. Carmen, Sr. Françoise, Sr. Marie and Sr. Iliana. The Vincentian Family in India extends hearty congratulations and assures sincere prayers to the New Team of the DC.



1st row (bottom), from the left to the right: Sr Corinna, Sr Neghesti; Sr Teresa, Sr Hanna; 2nd row (middle), from the left to the right: Sr Carmen, Sr Françoise, Sr Kathleen, Sr Marie; 3rd row (top): Sr Iliana



PRESHITHARAM SISTERS (CPS)

New General Team

The 13th General Synaxis of the Congregation of Preshitharam Sisters which was held on 7th May 2015 at Preshitharam Generalate, Kalady, Kerala had re-elected Sr. Eucharist Chirayil CPS as the Superior General. The new General Team is as follows: Councilors - Sr. Mercy Paul CPS, Sr. Dona CPS, Sr. Mancy CPS and Sr. Silvy CPS. Sr. Joyce CPS is the new Procurator General and Sr. Lisieux Rose CPS is the new Secretary General. The Vincentian

Family in India extends hearty congratulations and assures sincere prayers to the New Team of the CPS.

SAINTS AND BLESSEDS OF VINCNETINA FAMILY

ST. FRANCIS REGIS CLET, PRIEST AND MARTYR (1748-1820)

His Childhood, Vocation and Priesthood

Francis Regis Clet was born in Grenoble in Southern France on 19th August 1748. Francis was the tenth of fifteen children. He did his primary schooling in the college at Grenoble under the management of the Jesuits Fathers. The family was blessed with many vocations: a brother of Francis entered the Carthusian Order and a sister became a Carmelite nun. Francis in turn, joined the Congregation of the Mission in 1769 at the age of twenty-one. He went through the usual training career of priesthood as prescribed by the curriculum of the Congregation. He was ordained a priest in 1773. After ordination he was assigned to teach Moral Theology at the Seminary in Annecy, where he spent fifteen years. At Annecy he was affectionately called “the walking library” because of his encyclopedic knowledge and academic discipline. In 1788, the Superior General appointed him Spiritual Director of the newly admitted members of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris. Saint Francis always exposed his desire to be a foreign missionary and requested his superiors to allow him to go to China. But, his request was always rejected citing other reasons until 1791.

A Missionary to China

Francis Regis Clet’s repeated petition to go to China as a missionary took effect in 1791. At the age of 43, he replaced another priest who had to withdraw from the assignment at the last minute. The voyage took about six months, going round the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean through the strait of Sumatra to South China Sea to arrive at the Portuguese city of Macao. After a short stay at Macao, where he tried to accustom himself to the Chinese ways and customs, he was sent first to the province of Kiang-si in 1792.

It was difficult for him to learn the Chinese language. However, his missionary zeal never stopped him and he continued his mission serving the people for twenty-eight years in China. After a year at Kiang-si, Fr. Francis was transferred to the province of Hou-kouang in the North with a large Catholic population of about ten thousand people, but scattered through an area of two millions square miles. For five years, he labored there alone, administering to the catholic population and instructing the catechumens for baptism. At the end of five years, he had the consolation of receiving the help of three Chinese confreres.

Fr. Francis Regis Clet in his zeal was always on the move, often on foot and rarely on horseback, which was indeed a trying ride due to the poor quality of the paths. Nevertheless,

he never looked back while holding the plough on his hand. He kept his missionary zeal always burning for the souls. Thus, he brought many sheep to the fold of Christ including those who were lost and those were without Shepherd. A confrere, in writing about Clet's assignment to China, noted: "He has everything you could ask for: holiness, learning, health and charm."

Persecution, Martyrdom and canonization

In May 1819 there was an unusual thunderstorm, accompanied by darkness and heavy rains in Beijing. Magicians and astrologers informed the emperor that the Christians were behind the calamity. So he decided to repress them. Hou-kouang was one of the first provinces to experience this persecution. A pagan had burned down his own house, and then accused the Christians of the misdeed as having been perpetrated at the instigation of Fr. Francis Regis Clet. The civil and military mandarins joined their forces to capture the presumed culprits. Fr. Clet with the Chinese confrere Ho, managed to elude capture for six months, but finally was betrayed by one of his catechists for a sum of money. On Holy Trinity Sunday 16 July 1819 the party was captured and at first taken to the city of Nan-yang-fou, where the long process of questioning, and beatings began. The transfer to higher seats of authorities followed the same pattern of questioning and beating all over again.

On 1 January 1820, the grand mandarin finally imposed capital punishment by strangulation. The sentence however required ratification from the emperor and so the execution had to wait. The decision of the emperor arrived in due course, stating that the Europeans having deceived and corrupted many people by preaching the Gospel, must be tied to a cross and strangled. At dawn of 18 February 1820, the official took Fr. Francis Regis Clet out. After having received the permission from the murderer, the saint knelt down in the mud and snow as a sign of offering his life in sacrifice to God. Rising up on his knees he said to his executioners "tie me up to it", they tied him up to a cross already erected and a loop was passed on to his neck to bring about the death by suffocation. The tightening of the loop was repeated thrice according to the Chinese practice to make the victim suffer grievously. The saint's head fell gently forward and a stream of blood gushed down on his clothes. The saint had labored for 28 years in the mission field, ending his life in martyrdom.

His body was first buried in a cemetery meant for the burial of criminals. Later the Christians transferred it to the Red Mountains. It had remained there until 1859, when it was brought to Paris. Here, together with the instruments of his passion and clothing the mortal remains of the saint was kept in the Mother House of the Congregation of the Mission. Pope Leo XIII on 27 May 1900 beatified Fr. Francis Regis Clet. His canonization was effected by Pope John Paul II on 1 October 2000. His feast day is celebrated on 18 February in the Catholic Church.

Bro. Pravash Joseph CM