



Walk with us as we deepen our faith!

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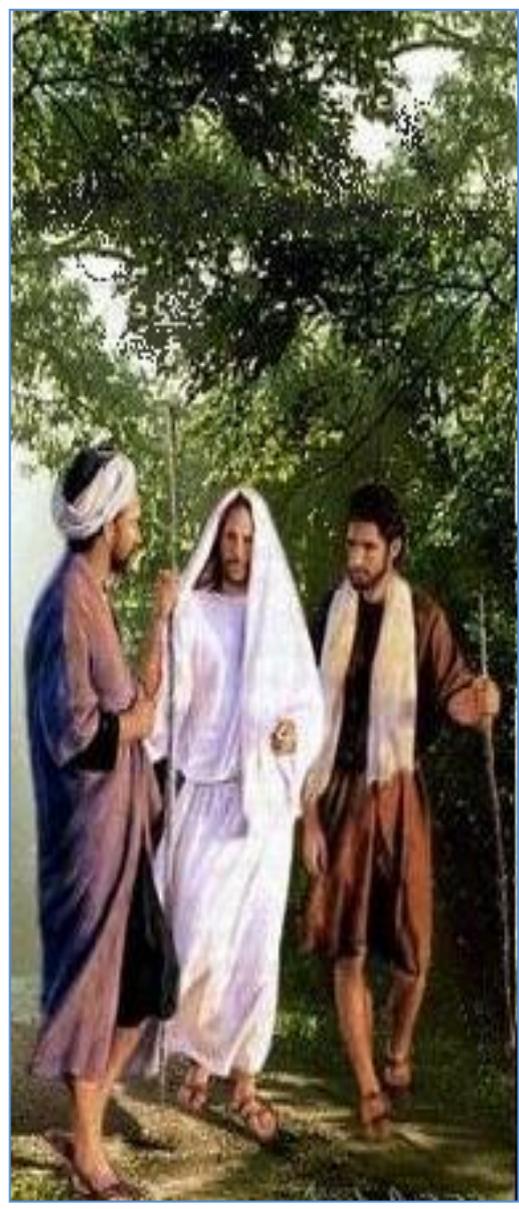
CHRIST HAS RISEN!

Jesus and the disciples on the Road to Emmaus Lc 24, 13-35

The Disciples were travelling to Emmaus, a village near Jerusalem. They were travelling together and were talking about the events that had occurred in Jerusalem. Someone approached them, asked a question and the Disciples attempted to respond. It could have been a pretext to simply establish a dialogue with persons who were known. Doesn't it happen to us ... that at times Jesus speaks to us and we do not recognize him!

May Jesus' passion and death and resurrection free us from the many chains that enslave us! Those who have a pure heart believe that they can be freed from their chains and it is for this reason that they will see God. Have we not had the experience of being at prayer, being engaged in a profound dialogue with the Risen Lord, and our hearts began "to burn" and we forgot about everything that was around us and outside of us because we were focused on the Lord? We recognize Jesus in the Eucharist and in prayer ... but as the sons and daughters of Saint Vincent and Saint Louise we also recognize the Lord in each brother and sister who approaches us because they need concrete services and we are able to assist them. Do we invite these individuals to stay with us? Does our heart burn when we are engaged in service?

The Disciples returned to Jerusalem and were filled with joy. After we have engaged in some form of service are we filled with joy and grateful for the opportunity to encounter our sisters and brothers who are in need, grateful for the opportunity to engage in dialogue with them, grateful for the opportunity to evangelize them? If this has been our experience then congratulations! JESUS IS RISEN and we have risen with him. Let us rejoice in this great event that unites us as Christians.



Sor Bernardita García Ortín
 DELEGATE INTERNATIONAL VMY





How are we going to know the way?

John 14, 5.

The Coptic icon (of the Arba قبط Qub which makes reference to the first Christians communities in Egypt) is known as the "Icon of Friendship" was found in the excavations that were carried out in 1900 at the Egyptian monastery in Baouit. In this graphic we see the Abbot Saint Menas (the head of the Abbey) together with Jesus who is accompanying him on the road.

In this graphic, which is presently found in the Louvre Museum in Paris, we are able to note certain elements of the meaning of accompanying and guiding another. Let us pause to examine this image.

Two friends are walking together, the Abbot Menas and Jesus. We know they are on some path because their feet are shown touching the earth and its vegetation, they are not strangers to this world. Indeed, they are not walking on some fine, soft carpet but rather they are **walking in the midst of the reality that surrounds them.**



Jesus places his right hand on the left shoulder of the Abbot, a sign that Jesus is supporting him and is also his companion, Jesus walks with him (not ahead of him and not behind him; he is not pushing him nor is he dragging him along the path) again **Jesus walks with him.**

Jesus firmly holds in his left hand the book of the gospels because on this journey the Word of God is the primary guide ... in fact all counsel, teaching and suggestions for the spiritual life spring forth from the Word of God which is also the nourishment for all the children of God. Those who accompany others on the journey should never forget that their spiritual advice should always be based on this word, that is, the **Word of God.**



The right hand of the Abbot Menas, who is being accompanied by Jesus and guided by the Master of Masters, is greeting and blessing the bystanders, that is, the other persons who are also travelling the same road, those persons whom he meets as he travels along the road. The abbot shows a great satisfaction in knowing that he is being accompanied as he travels the road. He not only allows himself to be accompanied but he also walks with a certain confidence because now **he knows where he is going.**

Finally, in this image there is another point that is barely perceptible to us, and here we are referring to the eyes of the two friends. If we look closely at their eyes we see that the left eye of Jesus is focused on the road while his right eye is directed toward the Abbot. The same can be observed with regard to the eyes of the Abbot, his right eye is focused on the road while his left eye is directed toward Jesus. Two friends have decided to walk this road together and as they walk neither of them wants to lose sight of the objective, of the goal, they know where they are going but they also do not want to lose sight of one another. They walk together and are mindful of one another as **they walk along the road together.**



Yancarlos de Js. Carrasco
Volunteer for the English Speaker Countries



LIKE A MUSTARD SEED

As young people in a populous society that has witnessed great turmoil and unrest throughout the past few years, we feel the heavy responsibility that rests on us. We see the gap between the rich and the poor persistently getting larger and larger and together with various Christian charitable associations, we strive to fill that gap even if these efforts aren't always met with gratitude or even support.

It's been very easy to become aware of this reality and see how many people have lost hope and how they sometimes feel abandoned by the rest of the society. In a highly populated country like Egypt, it is sometimes hard to distinguish between what is right and what is acceptable, because what is acceptable by the majority of the society doesn't have to be inherently right or good according to our Christian faith.

This high rate of disappointment that grew in the hearts of the young people after they figured out that change was not as easy as it sounded and that the core of change is in fact changing one's self. We find our mission is to make clear the path that eventually leads to true change of the heart, the spirit and then reality. However, supplying these needs, that are steadily growing, requires making sure that our ways would be effective enough with the young people involved. And this end is impossible to achieve or reach without making of ourselves living examples for care and affection with enthusiasm towards those who need them.

Today, VMY is one of the best known Catholic associations that don't only serve in the Christian community but also in the Egyptian society as a whole. In Alexandria, VMY Festival is the second largest annual festival in the city. The local group that hosted the event since 2008 found out how to reach to the

hearts of families and plant happiness and peacefulness in the hearts that are varied by religious and political beliefs. In Cairo, and in spite of all the problems that the city has witnessed, the two groups continue to serve with great enthusiasm and effectively developed the formation program. The groups in Asyut are constantly growing and they're working on more than one service program that aims to helping the poor, the orphans and the widowed and spreading the spirit of charity.

These successes aren't always easily achieved. I remember the numerous times when we were told that this effort is in vain or these projects are pointless. We find ourselves required to meet ignorance with care and patience even if the fruits of our work don't appear instantly because sometimes the problem is too complicated to be utterly solved and our role in that case becomes limited in helping the situation not becoming worse than it is. Our key to success is the belief that all efforts are fruitful even if the results are sometimes not visible or less than expected because our existence and work in our society is itself a visible result of Christ's work in the hearts of young people as we hold the belief that charity is not just a choice but an obligation to any Christian who is aware of his/ her faith.

On the other hand, disappointments have taught us a lot especially in the previous couple of years when it was very hard for the groups to function easily or even to meet during the disturbances. Our job in these hard times was to give the members hope and to make hope believable and sustainable even in the worst case scenarios because their job later took another step to spread this hope and to make people wonder why we were that optimistic. This happened on many instances and was very obvious when we saw people joining us in our group prayers shared on social media and the incredible interaction that took place later. That was the reason why many have been encouraged to say that they still believe that all things should turn at a point to be better and more peaceful

and that belief is what we struggle to keep up till now.

One of our main goals in this period is to pay good attention to the challenges that young people face in our society these days and alternatively overcome these challenges by working on the development of our formation program in a way that suits the constantly increasing ideological needs.

As Vincentians we keep reminding ourselves of the good impact that people like Saint Vincent, Saint Luise and Frederick Ozanam have left on the future of their societies in times when the social conditions weren't at their best. However, they never forgot that the mustard seed which is the smallest of all seeds grows so large that birds can rest in the shade of its branches.



To Jesus with Mary,

Andrew Wagdy
VMY, Egypt



MOVING TOWARD THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF ADVISORS PARIS, 2014



Dear Advisors:

The time for the International Meeting of Advisors is drawing near! This is a time that will provide us with an opportunity to dialogue, reflect and share with one another on the different manners in which we can accompany the young men and women who are members of our Association so that they, in turn, become protagonists of a world filled with hope and joy and meaning. Accompaniment means that we are willing to walk together with other people and help them as they make decisions with regard to their life.

We wish to share with you the logo of our Meeting and the significance of the logo:

Jesus, Mary and Vincent, through the Vincentian Marian Youth Association, illuminate our journey.

The road is where we encounter the young men and women and the place where we are to accompany them.

The one who accompanies the young person does this by being close to them.

The young people being accompanied are at different stages of the journey.

As they travel along the road they engage in a conversation in which the one being accompanied speaks in his/her "language" and the advisor listens.

The advisor assigns tasks, corrects and counsels.

The persons being accompanied ask questions and question themselves.

The advisor responds to these questions from his/her experience of God, from his/her nearness to God.

VMY IN THE WORLD

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Southern India

The members of the VMY in this country work together with the members of the Miraculous Medal Association as they promote devotion to the Blessed Mother. They have presented thirty-seven Marian exhibitions, held sixty-three Marian seminars and twenty-six Marian conventions, as well as numerous processions during the months of May and October. A great number of Miraculous Medals have been distributed.

Solomon Islands

The members of the Vincentian Marian Youth Association in the Solomon Islands and the National Council (with the collaboration of the Missionaries of the Congregation of the Mission) have worked together in order to establish the association on these Islands. At the present time there are six groups that are spread out in the dioceses of Honiara and Auki. The members of the Association come together for prayer and for the apostolate which involves assisting the infirm, helping people clean their houses and yards. They have also organized some sporting events and picnics for other young people.

Philippines

This year the members of the VMY in the Philippines will hold their Summer Youth Camp in Genesis Valley Mountain Resort in Cebu. This is the eleventh year for this event that was begun in 1994 in Laguna. Youth leaders and moderators of parish and school groups will participate in this event. They will also take advantage of this opportunity to present the campaign "one euro (dollar) for my association". We congratulate the members of the groups for their work and we pray that they might continue to live their faith with joy and with Mary, our Mother.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AND SECRETARIAT

- The Director General of the VMY, Fr. Gregory Gay CM, has confirmed the following appointments: : **Wilfredo Rodezno** (President of the VMY, Honduras), **Mihret Habtemichael** (President of the VMY, Eritrea), **Marianne Ecco** (President of the VMY, Lebanon), **Urška Škrabec** (President of the VMY, Slovenia), **Jefferson Yamil Trinidad** (National Coordinator of the VMY, Dominican Republic), **Yvette Ramanjakatiana Tombontsoa** (President of the VMY, Madagascar), **Juan Carlos Mamani** (President of the VMY, Bolivia), **Rev. Hector Omar Oviedo, CM** (Advisor, APU), **Rev. Zecharias Goitom, CM** (Advisor, Eritrea), **Rev. Calisto Roberto Chaúque, CM** (Advisor, Mozambique), **Rev. Guy Ekofa, CM** (Advisor, Congo), **Rev. Carlos Albeiro Velasquez Bravo, CM** (Advisor, Colombia), **Rev. Francisco Amésquita Gámez, CM** (Advisor, Perú), **Rev. Daniel Noël Dongmo, CM** (Advisor, Camerún), **Sister Lourdes Feliberty Gonzalez, DC** (Advisor, Puerto Rico), **Sister Regina de Souza, DC** (Advisor, Fortaleza - Brasil), **Sister Yineth Marcela Rivas Varon, DC** (Asesora de Colombia).
- Bienvenu Bienvenu Fouda, representing the International Secretariat, participated in a national meeting of Missionary Animators ... COVIDE-AMVE (Madrid), March 1-2, 2014. The theme of this meeting was: A New Evangelization: a new continent has been born and it is the existential continent of non-believers and those who are excluded”.

- March 8-9, 2014 the Team at the International Secretariat participated in a meeting of Dynamic Leaders that was sponsored by the VMY in Spain. This was a time in which we witnessed some creative formation as we reflected on the ways in which God “beheld” the people in the Old Testament and then the way in which Jesus “looked at” people in the gospels. The workshops and the dialogue allowed us to deepen our understanding of this theme.



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- In order to strengthen the prayer of the young men and women we are offering the book *Praying with Vincent de Paul* (contains profound spiritual material in a Vincentian tradition). This book is available in English, Spanish and French.



- Easter has arrived!!! During Lent we proposed a campaign “One Euro for My Association”. This is the opportune moment for you to share with us the results of that campaign ... for it is only in this way that we will be able to move forward with our commitment to establish a patrimonial fund. This in turn will allow the VMY to strengthen its activity in the Church and to respond with greater autonomy to the cries of the countless young men and women and to the cries of the poor.

www.secretariadojmv.org



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