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Evangelized, we evangelize!



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With this theme we journey as an

Association toward the IV General Assembly of the VMY which will take place in Salamanca, Spain (July 2015). The theme for this year, 2015, involves us in a twofold complementary and yet simultaneous dynamic.

We need to experience ourselves as persons who are evangelized, that is, persons who embrace the Word of God and who allow that Word, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to guide our activity. To be evangelized can sound passive. Nevertheless, conversion, which is a grace, makes us active participants because God does not impose himself on us. God stands at the door waiting for us to open the door so that God, in turn, might dwell with us (Revelation 3:20). God calls and invites, but God also accepts the spontaneous response of the disciples, for example, the response of the young rich man who rejected the call to live his life in a radical manner. To be evangelized requires openness and initiative ... it involves questioning ourselves as a result of an encounter with the other, with marginalized men and women, with events ... questioning ourselves in order to recognize the call of God in all of those different situations. To be evangelized enables us to love because we have come to

understand that God has first loved us. We can say that to be evangelized is not some activity that is engaged in once and for all, but rather is a process in which we are daily renewed through prayer, through listening and through service. It would be good to ask ourselves if we allow ourselves to be renewed and transformed on a daily basis in order to reach out and encounter our brothers and sisters.

Those, who experience this process of being evangelized, naturally want to share this Good News with other people.

**“THE POOR
EVANGELIZE US”**

Therefore, our transformation in Christ should never lead us to look at ourselves and/or our life in some self-satisfied manner. Rather that transformation in Christ should impel us to share the process that changed our life with others individuals. Evangelization is the center of the mission of the Church and the center of all Christian life. Faith is given and received as a gift that is to be shared with others.

At the same time this gift of faith is lived in community. As men and women of faith we involve ourselves in a process in which we deepen our understanding of the gospel so that Christ might enlighten the life of our society and fill with hope all those people who allow themselves to believe

in and to dream of a better world. The process of

evangelization is accomplished by word and action. Therefore, as members of the larger Vincentian Family, we promote and engage in various projects and various forms of ministry (at the same time we are always mindful of the need for an explicit proclamation of Christ’s message) that are expressions of our commitment to God, expressions of our commitment to our less fortunate brothers and sisters. In this twofold dynamic of proclamation and action the gospel becomes credible and we reveal the fact that Christ lives in us.

The poor evangelize us! The certainty of this Vincentian conviction impels us to reach out to others in order to bring them a message that can enlighten and transform them. We will be able to evangelize others to the degree that we allow ourselves to be evangelized by God in prayer and evangelized by others through the events of our daily life. May you have a joyful 2015 as evangelizers and as men and women who allow yourselves to be evangelized!

Yasmine CAJUSTE
VMY International
President



Angola:

From February 14-16, 2015 the members of the Association in this country celebrated their National Assembly in Quibala. The theme of the gathering was: Today, the VMY is called to be a prophet! The purpose of this gathering was to analyze the various challenges that the Association faces, as well as the hopes of the members. At the same time a National Council was elected and activities were planned for the year. Let us continue to pray for the members of the VMY in this country.



Mozambique:

During the time of January 13-15 the VMY-JUMAR celebrated their National Assembly with the theme: With joy we join Mary in serving the poor! The province in the northern section of the country was unable to be present because of storms that closed the highways. We pray that the members might continue to encourage one another as they serve those men and women who are poor.



FORMATION

DEEPENING OUR MOTTO...

This brief reflection will focus on the theme that has been chosen by the International Council for our consideration during the year 2015 "Evangelized, we evangelize", when we will live a graced moment in Salamanca where we will gather for our IV General Assembly. This theme presents us with a subtle play on words since the words come from the same root. In the first instance we become the objects of evangelization and in the second instance we are active subjects of the process of evangelization. Thus, there is a process of "give and take" in the ministry of evangelization. We can then ask the question: How can we allow ourselves to be evangelized? In the midst of a secularized world, what is the meaning of evangelization? Without attempting to present some theological treatise, I would like to offer some insights on this theme, insights that I believe are key for the members of the VMY.

How can we allow ourselves to be evangelized? Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily at the beginning of his Pontificate in 2005 stated very clearly: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life. God is revealed in the person of Jesus who is present in the Word and in the Eucharist. Let us allow ourselves to encounter him so that we might live with dignity as children of God. Indeed, the result of such an encounter is a relations of friendship in which we feel close to God.

What does it mean to evangelize? I would simply say that it means to be transparent before the world, that is, to show the world what it means to have had an encounter with Christ. To evangelize means that we are Christ's witnesses ... witnesses which the world so desperately needs! Again Pope Benedict XVI in his Lenten Message of 2006 stated: the worst poverty is to not know Christ! ... and therefore we are called

to be mindful of this reality and to proclaim a message of joy and love and peace to our brothers and sisters. We are called to do this as members of the VMY in a manner that conveys a sense of co-responsibility so that together we can journey as members of the living Church. The VMY offers resources that promote volunteerism, a service of solidarity and the formation of missionaries that allows young men and women to communicate the faith to other youth people.

Saint Vincent reminds us that there is a wonderful way to join together being evangelized and evangelizing others, namely, service on behalf of those men and women who are most poor. Such service enables us to reach out to others (to put aside our own selfishness in order to evangelize other) and as we reach out to others we encounters Christ and have the possibility of being evangelized by those who are poor.

Some questions:
In the present context of your life, do you believe that the task of being evangelized has been completed? What have been the sources of your growth in coming to know Christ? Do you believe that your group and/or your environment is helping you to evangelize? How do you feel you are able to engage in this process of communicating the Good News to others?

Ghislain Atemezing
(Councilor for Africa)



"MY SOUL PROCLAIMS THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD"

Greetings ... my name is Fabiola Torres Rivera and I have the privilege of being a member of the VMY in Puerto Rico. On December 30th, God and the Blessed Mother gave me the best gift: for a seventh time I was able to participate in the popular missions in the Dominican Republic. Each missionary journey is unique because there is much to share, much to learn and many opportunities to grow and to love and, as a young person, many opportunities to discover the plan of God.



During this missionary trip I once again visited "La Casa Rosada" a home for children who are HIV+. This center is administered by the Daughters of Charity. I was also offered the opportunity to share with children who were in orphanages and who live in very poor neighborhoods.

During one of my previous missionary trips I discovered one of the most important elements about ministry if it is to be effective: follow up. I learned that it is not enough to distribute food and clothing, rather we must also learn the names of the people and their concerns. We must let people know that in our eyes they are important and also enable them to experience God's great love for them. The Good Shepherd tells us that he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. He knows what they like and also knows their suffering and their needs. They in turn know that they are loved and know that the Shepherd is concerned about what happens to them ... the same could be said about the many children whom I encountered during my missionary experience.

A few days ago I had a very wonderful experience. A young girl from the center for children who are HIV+, who views me as her godmother, wanted to spend a weekend with me. I brought her to the house where I was staying and from there we went out to visit the people in this poor neighborhood. This young girl had been close to death last year and I see her as a "miracle". She is an orphan, has few recourses and yet she reminded me of Saint Vincent's words: The poor will be saved by the poor! As soon as the young girl saw the other children in the neighborhood, she forgot herself and served them with love and with a wonderful simplicity. She danced with them, combed their hair, played games with them ... and she did all of this not because someone had asked her to but because all of this arose from her generous, gentle heart. Later she told me: I want to be a grown up so I can travel with you and be a missionary like you!

Those were the most wonderful words that I could ever hear. I have begun to realize that the poverty of one person is quite distinct from the poverty of another and therefore if we want to, we can always serve other people and give ourselves to them. We can help people help others; we can be bridges of charity and this has been one of my greatest joys. There are many people who want to serve but do not know how. I give thanks to God because the missions that I have participated in have always been missions that have involved team work. Yes, God sends me angels who with their prayers and donations and the gift of their time accompany me during the missions.

We ought to animate ourselves to serve and we should be mindful of the fact that each moment is any opportunity to be a missionary, an opportunity to give ourselves to others. Let us recall the words of Saint Vincent: Love is inventive unto infinity! ... The poor are our lords and masters! I rely on your prayers so that the poor, our lords and masters, might always find a friendly hand that is willing to help them pick themselves up and reach out to serve others. I rely on your prayers especially your prayers for the poor who live in these poor neighborhoods. And so I give thanks to God and to his Blessed Mother for the gift and the privilege of being able to serve.

To Jesus with Mary
Fabiola Torres Rivera
VMY – Puerto Rico



WE ARE LOOKING FOR... A YOUNG PERSON WHO IS AVAILABLE AND JOYFUL

«To whomever I send you, you shall go" (Jeremiah 1,7)

The International Secretariat wants to continue to strengthen its communication with the members in all the different countries and in order to do this we need young men and women who are willing to collaborate in this task of maintaining networks of communication, especially networks with those countries where Portuguese is spoken. Therefore we extend an invitation to those individuals who are willing to commit themselves to this missionary task for a period of three years at the International Secretariat. This is an opportunity to collaborate, to know and to grow. We hope to see you here



Go forth from your own community and be bold as you reach out to all those living on the periphery (Francis)

Winners of the contest for design of the Logo and for the composition of the hymn for IV General Assembly 2015

“When our gifts are placed at the service of the community and society, they are multiplied”

We are filled with joy and with enthusiasm to be able to participate in this contest for designing the logo and composing the hymn. The winners were the following:

Composition of the Hymn: VMY – Spain

Design of the Logo: VMY – Nicaragua

We thank all those who responded to the invitation to participate in this contest. Let us continue to be creative so that this enthusiasm might fill our spirits. The hymn and the logo will be placed on our webpage in the very near future.

International Team



God, our Father, you call us to evangelize all people in the manner of Saint Vincent de Paul who has given to us this method as an inheritance.

Christ calls us to be light to the world (the essence of evangelization) --- Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.

The Lord speaks to us through the Holy Spirit and through the Sacred Scriptures.

Young Vincentians, as men and women of faith and as members of the VMY, evangelize other people through charity/mission and they do this with courage, love and the hope of creating a better world.

Young Vincentians raise high the victorious sign of Christ so that the world might know and believe in Jesus. These young men and women are filled with infinite grace which they in turn offer to others.

Yes, young Vincentians proclaim the message throughout the world as they build up the Kingdom of God ... I have placed you before the nations as a light and you are to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all people!

VMY Nicaragua
Daniel P.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AND SECRETARIAT

- The Director General of the VMY, Father Gregory Gay, CM, approved and announced the following appointments: **Father Jesús Plascencia, CM** (Advisor, Mexico).
- Father Gregory Gay, CM approved the National Statutes for Egypt (January 2015).
- From January 15-19th the International Council of the VMY met in the Secretariat in Madrid. During that time the progress of the Association and the Secretariat was reviewed. We placed in common certain projects in order to continue to strengthen our Association and in order to plan for our General Assembly. This work was done in an environment of reflection, friendship and communion and was viewed from a perspective of attempting to fulfill our dream of being evangelized in order to evangelize.
- Some days ago the International President sent out her annual letter in which she made reference to important themes such as, the General Assembly, the self-financing campaign, etc.