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INTERNATIONAL



Evangelized, we evangelize!



Dear members and friends of VMY!

It is with great joy that I greet you during this wonderful liturgical season of Advent and I pray that during the New Year we might continue to evangelize as a "church that goes forth".

As members of the Vincentian Marian Youth Association we live at a time of grace: we have just celebrated the 185th anniversary of the apparitions of the Blessed Mother to Saint Catherine Laboure and that reality should encourage us to strengthen our sense of belonging to the VMY and to the Church.



That same reality should also enable us to provide concrete responses to the many challenges that we must confront, that should enable to offer those responses as committed Christians as we confront the many distinct and new forms of poverty which seem to multiply with the passing of each day.

To be merciful as the Father is merciful. Those words summarize the invitation of Pope Francis during this Holy Year of Mercy, an invitation to be witnesses of mercy. Mercy arises from a feeling of compassion that is awakened in individuals as the result of experiencing the misfortune or misery of another. The word "mercy" is derived from two Latin words: misere (to have compassion) and cordis (heart) thus, to have a compassionate heart, to have an ability to feel what another is feeling, to be in solidarity with another. This is a very important time in the life of each and every Christian and for the members of the VMY we now take on an ever greater commitment. In other words, as the result of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, evangelizing the poor, we become witnesses of a church that goes forth (all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel [Evangelii Gaudium, #20]).

Such was the experience of Mary who set out in haste (Luke 1:37) to visit her cousin Elizabeth and to proclaim the Magnificat, the essence of our Marian spirituality. Such was also the experience of Vincent de Paul who went forth to hear the confession of the dying man which then led him to engage in the ministry of popular missions. Hopefully, this will also be our experience during the coming year.

May this Christmas season enable us to experience the permanent love of Jesus Christ who is born anew every day in our hearts when we listen to his voice, especially his voice as revealed in the voices of our sisters and brothers who are poor.



Rafael CRUZ
Councilor of the Americas



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Burkina Faso

More than 400 children participated in our summer camp which was held in Nasso from July 31st to August 16th. The participants came from the towns of Bobo-Dioulasso, Nasso, Kokorowe and Bana. Some of the activities were: hair-styling, baking (for the girls) and various manual trades (for the boys). The team responsible for this experience was composed of twenty-five individuals who helped each one of the participants to bring the torch of a Christian and human education to their families and to everyone whom they would encounter.



Egypt:

A formation session for leaders was held in Alexandria from August 17th – 20th, 2015 at which time the following themes were developed: leadership, service, listen to the voice of God. The National Assembly was held in September (23rd and 24th) and during that time a new National Council was elected: Nadia Hany (National President), Remonda Philippe (National Vice-President), Mina Victor (National Treasurer), Mariane Takaway (National Secretary).



Brazil

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the VMY in Brazil, the National Council unveiled a new webpage: www.jmvbrasil.org. At the same time preparations were begun for the VII National Assembly which will take place May 26th – 29th, 2016. During that Assembly a new National Council will be elected.

Costa Rica

During the year the members developed the following objectives: to discover who we are as individuals and to come to a greater knowledge of the other members of our groups; to ground our work together; to learn assertiveness in making decisions. This mean that we had to come to know the three dimensions of each member, that is, to know them as children of God (composed of body, spirit, and soul). This process also involved defining what it means to be a leader in the VMY and analyzing our knowledge of the founders, the origins, the history and the spread of the VMY throughout the world. All of this was intended to motivate and deepen our sense of responsibility and enable us to take on different roles of leadership on a national level.

Ecuador

Our National Assembly took place in the city of Quito (October 31st, November 1st and 2nd) ... a time of formation and prayer and a time to elect new members of the National Council. The members of the Council ask us to pray for them so that they might give witness to the "yes" which they proclaimed at the time of their election and so that they might also be faithful to the mission that has been entrusted to them by our Blessed Mother.

Peru:

On December 8th the members celebrated the opening of the Jubilee Year of the VMY (occasioned by the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of this Association in Peru). The Eucharist was celebrated by Father Francisco and during that celebration a candle was lit to symbolize the joy that should characterize the lives of the members.

AMERICA



VMY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Dominican Republic:

A National Meeting took place on November 8th and the central theme was: the consecrated life. Two hundred twenty young men and women, from all the various centers, participated in this Meeting.

On November 29th we celebrated the Eucharist during which the young men and women who will direct the Advent Mission were sent forth. These missions will take place in hospitals and asylums throughout the country. We are happy to share the news that the Offices of the National Secretariat were inaugurated. These were blessed by Father Gregorio Alegría, CM and many young men and women from the various centers participated in this ceremony.

Croatia:

On November 14th the member of the VMY in Croatia gathered together in the city of Rijeka for the purpose of electing a new national coordinating team ... Petra Štokić was elected coordinator. At the same time the Final Document of the 2015 General Assembly was presented and together we studied the Document. The VMY in Croatia continues to grow and has communicated and shared its spirit with the members of the VMY in Bosnia and Herzegovina (these groups also participated in the 2015 General Assembly).

France:

The VMY in France held its National Assembly on October 17th and 18th, 2015. Aurélie Madrid was elected National President. The motto that was chosen for 2016 is the following: Our destiny is blessedness; let us live the challenge of the beatitudes!

Lebanon:

On May 10th the members participated in a Marian March under the words: Let us walk with Mary for peace in Lebanon, in the Middle East and throughout the world! On the 29th of the same month all the groups gathered together in prayer in order to bring to a conclusion the month of May which was dedicated to Mary, under the title, Mary, Mother of Mercy.

We celebrated the 18th of July by participating in the Eucharist and then sharing a meal with the Vincentian priests and brothers and the Daughters of Charity (formers members of the VMY also accompanied us during this celebration).

August 19th – 23rd a formation session took place for the various individuals who are responsible for the groups. Together they prepared the theme for the coming year: Speak Lord, for your servant is listening! On September 20th the National Council held its annual meeting.

Syria:

Even though this country has been at war for five years, the member of the VMY had a very busy summer: summer camps, the celebration of the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul with the larger Vincentian Family, a National Assembly. Yes, the members of the group have been very active. We continue to pray for all the members ... praying that God will give them the strength to continue to move forward planting seeds of peace.

EUROPE





The International Encounter of Delegates for preparation of World Youth Day, Krakow 2016 was held in Karkow, Poland (November 25-29). About three hundred persons, from some 100 countries and dozens of international associations (including the VMY which was represented by Fábio Mendes [Portugal] and Klaudia Biala [Poland]), participated in this meeting.

Each movement and country was represented by two leaders who have been assigned to this event by their respective associations. Several bishops were also present as well other individuals responsible for various aspects of Word Youth Day, all of these individuals enriched the encounter.

There was time for an exchange of ideas, an opportunity to know about the various associations and an opportunity to understand the various ways in which youth ministry functions in other countries. At the same time, we were able to share contact information thus enabling us to be closer to one another through the use of the social media.

The objective of this meeting was to make known the plans with regard to the celebration of World Youth Day and to provide us with an opportunity to debate and offer our opinion with regard to the happenings that will occur in Poland in July 2016.

The participants have high expectations and all were anxious to receive more news and to receive information about the unfolding of various events (where events will take place, security procedures, etc.). Everything was developed with one single objective: to guarantee that World Youth Day will be developed in the best possible manner and that the young men and women who participate will experience the joy of Christ.

Under the words: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*, a very detailed structure was presented that will allow the young persons who participate to have a spiritual experience in the country where Saint John Paul II was born. The young people will be part of an incredible pilgrimage to a very historic city where people have a deep Christian faith ... more than 20 canonized saints were born in this city.

In addition to visiting the various monuments and shrines and in addition to participating in the celebrations with Pope Francis, the participants will have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities during this youth festival, activities that will

be developed during the course of the days of the World Youth Day celebration include sports, catechesis, music, theatre, artistic events (all of these being different ways to experience the joy of the risen Lord.

Something new is the ability to register through your mobile phone which at the same time will enable the participants the find places more easily, will provide participants with a schedule of events, will allow people to communicate with other individuals who speak the same language and many other possibilities.

For young Vincentians, another awaited event is the encounter that will take place before World Youth Day, an event that will allow the participants to know one another and to share experiences. This is a unique opportunity for the members of the VMY who desire to participate in World Youth Day.

We now know where many of the events of World Youth Day will unfold and this meeting was a very enriching experience. We were able to explain the objectives of the VMY and also felt as though we were participating in the planning of a very important event.

I was very happy to see the enthusiasm of the young people from Poland and it has become clearer and clearer that the success of such an event depends on the cooperation of everyone who is involved. Therefore, it is very important that those responsible for the various groups help the young men and women to prepare for this event so that it can be an experience that enriches their lives.

We hope to see all of you at World Youth Day in Krakow, 2016!.

Fabio Mendes
VMY Portugal



Mary is our Mother. John the evangelist states that when Jesus was on the cross he made that fact very clear: When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home (John 19;26-27). Do you experience Mary as your mother? Do your experience yourself as a brother/sister to all of Mary's children.

To evangelize is to spread the gospel everywhere and we engage in such activity because we have been touched by God. It is God how impels us, motivates us and gives meaning to our lives. In order to evangelize we have to pray and discover the One who is within us and who is faithful. Such prayer should give us joy, hope and courage to follow Jesus, the Risen One (because we now experience ourselves as saved). Therefore, the personal encounter with Jesus is very important, such an encounter was even more important for Mary, Jesus' mother and our mother.

Mary is truly mother because she walks with us and knows God's love. We ask that she intercede on behalf of the New Evangelization which at this time is being accomplished throughout the world. Throughout her life Mary allowed herself to be led by the Holy Spirit and as a result her faith was deepened. All of us who are members of the VMY should ask Mary to intercede on our behalf so that we might be courageous and also allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit. It is in that way that we will live in accord with the will of God.

Without a doubt Mary live in intimacy with God and if we want to be authentic evangelizers we must also develop an intimate relationship with God. Without such a relationship there is no Good News. How do you experience this intimacy with God? Do you look for a time to be with God and to dialogue with God? The Magnificat is the prayer of those who have been faithful throughout their life, of those who have committed their life to God. For that reason God has done wonderful things! What did Mary request in the Magnificat? Surprisingly, nothing! Rather she praised God because God had been faithful to the promises that were made. For this reason Mary is blessed. She listened to the voice of God and put into practice the words that she heard. May the humility of Mary increase in our own life and may we live with that same gospel attitude that allows us to approach and draw near to those who poor. Mary served her cousin Elizabeth and proclaimed to her the Good News. Each one of us as members of the VMY is called to do the same and therefore it can be asked: are we Good News for others? Hopefully we are!!

Are we as blessed as Mary as a result of listening to the word of God? Do we put into practice the words that we hear? God works in our midst but do we allow God to act in our own life?

Hopefully we are filled with the gospel so that we can proclaim the good news to every part of the world.



Sister Bernardita Garcia Ortin, DC
International Delegate

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL AND SECRETARIAT

- The Director General of the VMY, Father Gregory Gay, CM, confirmed and published the following appointments: **Fr. Ralph Germanos, CM** (Advisor in Lebanon), **Fr. Akobundu Anyawu, CM**, (Advisor in Nigeria), **Sister Amina Brenda Dlate, DC**, (Advisor in Mozambique).
- Fr. Gregory Gay, CM approved the National Statutes for the groups in the United States (December 2015).
- On November 27, the International Secretariat of the VMY, together with the Vincentian Family in Spain, celebrated the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal by participating in a prayer vigil at the Basilica.
- On December 5th and 6th the members at the International Secretariat of the VMY made their annual retreat in the city of Madrid, the retreat was directed by the sub-director Father Irving Amaro, CM and Father Tony Escobedo, CM (a member of the Province of Mexico). The participants reflected on the gospel of Luke which invites us to live Advent as a time of conversion, recognizing our limitations and opening ourselves to the love that Jesus extends to us and that is revealed to us through our brothers and sisters.
- The International Teams want to thank Rita Lopes Bemposta (Portugal) for her three years of service and dedication to the Association as a volunteers, may God continue to bless her as she journey's forward in life.



- The International Council and Secretariat wants to welcome André Peixoto, the new volunteer from Brazil (representing the Portuguese speaking countries). We ask you to pray for him so that his mission might be a source of blessing for our Association.

