

BULLETIN

International Vincentian Marian Youth



ANNUAL THEME

"Give something of yourself, as did Mary!"

REFLECTION...



...In my stocking

It is almost impossible to speak about the Nativity without speaking about my childhood. I was born into a family that provided me with the opportunity to live the Christian traditions of Christmas as well as other traditions that were less Christian. Among those various traditions and customs I am going to try to find the true meaning of the Nativity.

I remember with joy that after Midnight Mass we would sit in front of the fireplace and drink hot chocolate. We would remain there until all the firewood had become ashes and then we would hang out stocking over the fireplace. As soon as Christmas Day dawned I would run toward the fireplace to see what "Father Noel" had placed in my stocking ... there I found different gifts.

Despite being an action that is almost forgotten, I find in all of this many meanings that help to live the Nativity in a better way.

We rejoiced: today the fireplace is replaced with heaters and sharing the little things like a glass of warm milk with the family is replaced for many with a television program, some video games and/or an organizer.

The fire that became ashes: before any great event there is always a time of waiting, a time that transforms and renews us. We do not always know how to enjoy such moment and I personally am very impatient when it comes to waiting...

Placed the stockings in front of the fireplace: Today children write letters to "Father Noel" and adults are considering what gifts have to be ordered and purchased and so there are few surprises. To leave a stocking in front of the fireplace means that we allow ourselves to be surprised by the child-Jesus-God. It means that we allow ourselves to stand in awe at His coming.

To run to the fireplace to see: It is interesting to watch how we move about today during these weeks before Christmas as we search for the best gift. We go from store to store looking for something special and we forget that the most important that is not found in front of the fireplace but is found in our heart.

There I found the gifts: The gifts that we receive are not always the gifts that we had dreamed about. When this happened to me there was always someone who was able to explain to me that what I had received was the best gift in the world. These gifts were not bought hurriedly, without any thought ... often people worked very hard in order to be able to buy such a gift and at other times the gift was made by hand ... these gifts were always most precious. Thus I learned that the most important thing was not the gift itself but the joy in receiving, the dedication in making a gift and the love with which one gives a gift.

May this Christmas find us willing to receive Jesus! Put your stocking in front of the fireplace because Jesus will be born anew in this is what you desire!



Rita Bemposta

International Volunteer, VMY

VMY in the Word...

AMERICA...

BRAZIL:

November 2-4 in Rio de Janeiro the First Encounter of Young Adults in VMY was held. This was a gathering of young men and women who had been members of the VMY, who had professed their Marian consecration, who were former advisors and had transitioned into some other branch of the Vincentian Family. The objective of this gathering was to encourage, gather together and form advisors who are able to accompany other young men and women and able to do this in collaboration with other members of the Vincentian Family.

UNITED STATES:

On October 20th the National Council met in Saint Louis.

APU:

During the year 2012 the Association in these countries (Argentina/Paraguay/Uruguay) organized activities to foment their formation and their spiritual life.

AFRICA...

CAMEROON:

The VMY in Cameroon has been selected to organize the II African Encounter of the National Council, this first encounter that will take place in Africa.

MADAGASCAR:

The Association in this country has received the approval of the Episcopal Conference.

MOZAMBIQUE:

There is a new National Council of the VMY: Julia Antonio Cumbane, Helder Feliciano Siteo, Mauro Mario Estevão, (President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively) and Father Cinema Inueiua and Sister Elsa Fátima. May God bless all of you!

RWANDA-BURUNDI:

Their first national council has been elected: NDARUVUKANYE ELIE, MUNYARUKUNDO J.NEPOMUSCENE, HAGENIMANA ADELINE, UWIMANA MARIE, (President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively) Congratulations! From August 23 – September 9 the Association was visited by the International President. We have also received some information about activities that they are going to organize this year.



TOGO:

They had their annual camp-out and 36 young men and women participated and reflected on the annual theme as well as on some other themes of importance to the Association ... certificates were given to all the participants.

EUROPE...

FRANCE:

On October 18th together with their advisor (Monique) the young men and women of the "La Rue du Bac" group participated in a radio program called *Campaign on behalf of the Young Missionary*. At that time they were able to give witness to their commitment as members of the Association.

SLOVAKIA:

In October the members had their national gathering for advisors of the Association. Through some interesting workshops, activities and sharing in group there was an attempt to communicate to the participants of this gathering some information and experiences in the areas of pedagogy, health, social and spiritual life. Eight-five persons participated.



OCEANA...

SALOMON ISLAND:

We have received their proposal with regard to organizing the III Assembly of the National Councils of Asia and Oceana. The members celebrated the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul with the members of the Congregation of the Mission and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

ASIA...

THAILAND:

The Association celebrates its one year anniversary in this country. Congratulations!

SYRIA:

The members have as their motto for this year *We are going to share the peace of God!* This theme was chosen as a result of the situation in which the country finds itself and also as a result of the difficulties that the country must confront. Despite all of these problems the members continue with their formation and are actively involved in providing assistance to the many refugees. On November 24th the members celebrated their 35 anniversary. Congratulations!



Formation...

FORMATION IN THE VMY...



As members of this Association we cannot lose sight of the fact that formation plays a crucial role in the life of our groups. It is necessary to be mindful of the fact that we are called by the Virgin to evangelize other young men and women, but in order to do this we need a solid preparation.

In his time Saint Vincent insisted on good formation for the members of the clergy.

It is true that since that time there have been many changes. Yet the calls for help that we frequently receive from the different countries revolve around the issue of formation. It is therefore clear that formation is as important today as it was in the time of Saint Vincent.

From the time of our first General Assembly in 2000 to the time of our last Assembly in 2010 we, at the International Secretariat, have taken small steps in an attempt to respond to the need of the VMY throughout the world, the need for a program of integral formation that addresses the questions and the desires of our members. I said small steps because we know that we have not been able to respond to all the needs that you have placed before us.

A few days ago we published a simple document that together with other publications from this team is an attempt to provide the national councils with some tools to better organize their formation programs. We invite you to reflect anew on the importance of this aspect of the life of our Association. There are many different ways to structure this dimension of our life. Each national council should feel free to implement the model that best responds to their reality.

It is important to remember that the VMY is not closed in upon itself ... the members of the Association are called to give life to the Church and to the world.

The formation process should help the young men and women broaden their horizons with regard to the reality of the world and the Church.

Therefore when individuals conclude this process, they, like every adult Christian, have to look for those “places” where they can concretize their option and live out their commitment in an adult Christian community ... and perhaps live out this commitment in a new situation where they will encounter new circumstances.



P. Pavol Noga
Sub-director General



May the light that the shepherds and the Magi looked for and found in Bethlehem accompany you and enlighten you throughout the year 2013!!!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!

International Gatherings...

European and Middle Eastern Encounter...



VMY, Our Contribution to the New Evangelization.

With this motto we celebrated the III Encounter of the National Councils of Europe and the Middle East. This gathering was organized by the International Team of the VMY and by the VMY in Italy whose members made an invaluable contribution. The participants gathered together in Naples, Italy (November 22-25).

Seventy-five individuals from thirteen countries participated and this included young men and women and advisors who came together to deepen their understanding of the different ways in which they could contribute to the process of the "new evangelization" and engage in this process from the perspective of our Vincentian charism. The International Team was represented by Father Gregory Gay, CM, director of the Association and Father Pavol Noga, Sub-director of the VMY and Ghislain Atemezing, International Councilor.

The following themes were dealt with during the gathering: *To search for and proclaim the faith with a youthful passion* (Don Pascual, a Salesian priest) and *VMY, our contribution to the new evangelization* (Fr. Gregory Gay, our director). This was a valuable time of formation and the young men and women were provided with time to share among themselves the reality and the challenges that said reality presents to the young men and women of today.



At the conclusion of the gathering different commitments were made by the members of the VMY in the various countries and these commitments will enable the young men and women to continue the process of the new evangelization. We wish to thank in a special manner the Daughters of Charity in Naples for their hospitality and generosity.

International Team

WITNESS:

"I Don't know what changes more rapidly, the world or the rapidness of the change"

Today we live in the midst of great cultural changes, changes that are occurring inside and outside of the Church. Often these changes can impede the growth and the maturity of young people. Today it is very difficult for young people to look toward the future and plan. They live in the midst of a very unstable present reality and this instability is experienced on every level (work, relationships, affectivity). Today more than ever before it is necessary to speak about a new evangelization in the world, especially in Europe. Here we are speaking about a new evangelization for young people and among young people. It is important that we all know where we are and where we are going and it is equally important to awaken in others the need to question themselves and their present reality.

There is a need to speak about evangelization and the faith as more than an obligation. Indeed there is a need to be men and women of faith who have and are nourished by a personal relationship with God, who give witness to Jesus in the midst of the world, who are dedicated to a mission, and who live their faith and know why they believe and in whom they believe. Finally these same individuals know that they must live in community and serve the larger community. Being men and women of faith we can journey together along this path of authenticity and thus cast off any complex that might make us feel inferior to others. Young people need points of reference, authentic models who can teach and transmit the richness of the faith.

For three days about seventy-five young men and women from Europe and the Middle East shared their life together and discovered new paths along which they could travel. They made commitments as members of the VMY in different countries. They worked together, celebrated together, smiled and in the end there were also some tears.

Let us continue to build together the dream of Our Mother; let us continue to build up the Vincentian Marian Youth Association. With Vincent and Louise let us move together toward the new heaven and the new earth and share with one another our love.

We also give thanks to the International Team and the Secretariat and we offer a special thanks to the VMY in Italy.

Sono tutti nel cuore!



**Francisco Vilhena,
JMV Portugal**

VMY Witness:...

My Experience of Collaboration with the community of Sant'Egidio in Madrid...

As part of the Church and as Vincentians, the members of the VMY are called to provide for the needs of others and to collaborate in the building up of the Kingdom of God here on earth. We ought to dedicate ourselves and make every effort to enter into solidarity with those persons who are in great need. What better way to do this than to know and share our life and our ministry with members of other Associations who share the same charism of service on behalf of those who are poor.



**Emma Leticia
Velázquez Popoca,
VMY.**

In 2006 God gave me the opportunity to know of the community of Sant'Egidio and during a period of three years I have worked with them in serving the poor. What has most impressed me about this wonderful experience is the way in which the members of this community open their heart toward those in need. Each person whom they help is not simply another poor person but rather they are individuals who have names and an identity and a history that they share with us ... and from their own experiences and circumstances they provide us with great lessons about our lives. I have no hesitation in saying that each Wednesday we have a direct encounter with Jesus in the person of those men and women who are poor.

Before going out into the streets of central Madrid and offer a meal to the poor, we first offered our activities to God ... and we did this through prayer and reflection on the Word of God. I remember well the peace and serenity that this form of prayer gave me and I know that this is one of the fundamental pillars that grounds all the activities and initiatives of the community of Sant'Egidio.

How could one forget the family celebration that we experienced each December 25th. The community organized a meal in which everyone shared around the table. At that time there were no poor or volunteers, but rather we were brothers and sisters united together in joy as we celebrated the feast of the Nativity.

It has been a great blessing to be able to collaborate with the community of Sant'Egidio. Indeed, God has shown me that in the church there are many associations and communities that, from the perspective of prayer and the practical living out of the gospel, are very aware of the fact that the church "is for everyone, especially for the poor" (John XXIII).



Concil and Secretariat...

INTERNATIONAL...

- ✦ The Director General confirmed the following appointments: **Fr. Lèba ASSAF, CM** (Advisor, Lebanon) **Fr. Alejandro FABRES FABRES, CM** (Advisor, Chile).
- ✦ November 22-25, the Director of the International Secretariat, Fr. Pavol Noga, CM and the International Councilor, Ghislain Atemezang, participated in the **III Encounter of National Councils of Europe and the Middle East ...** this meeting took place in Naples, Italy. The final commitments that were taken at the conclusion of this gathering can be found on our web page.
- ✦ The International President, Yasmine Cajuste was invited by the Congregation of the Mission in China and other members of the Vincentian Family **to visit Hong Kong and China** during the period of November 15-30 in order to see the reality of said country and the places where the Vincentian Family is working. This was also an opportunity to explore the possibility of developing the Association in this country.
- ✦ We want to remind everyone that on November 27th the International Team published on its web site the document **Formation Processes**. We invite you to take advantage of this important document so that our formation might become more unified: <http://www.secretariadojmv.org/jmv/en/formation/vmy-formation-processes/>
- ✦ The next meeting of **the International Secretariat** will take place in Madrid on January 17-20 and so we ask for your prayer so that the decisions that we make might be illuminated by the Holy Spirit and enable the VMY to respond to the new signs of the time.
- ✦ The International Council and Secretariat **wishes everyone a Merry Christmas...**



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