

Bulletin



International Vincentian Marian Youth

TODAY IS THE DAY!

INTRODUCTION...



Prepare the way of the Lord
(Isaiah 40:3)

As Vincentians we had an opportunity to experience our spirituality in a more intense manner during the month of November and at the same time we celebrated the fact that we are members of this great family of Saint Vincent de Paul. We sat this because many of the celebrations that give us our identity occur during the month of November.

A very significant event stands out among the many others that we celebrated as Church, namely World Youth Day. In August the Catholic Church was well represented in Madrid, Spain. We felt proud to be able to give witness to our dynamism, our love for one another, and our Christian commitment. The year is coming to an end yet our living of the Vincentian charim continues.

The end of this year arouses different emotions within us. Some of us see beautiful colors which can become even brighter in the future. For others, these colors might not be so bright but there is hope that the situation will become better. Above all else, however, we accept the Christmas message: the invitation to live as a family. We do this because we have already experienced the communion of love, we have worked

together as a team and we have established relationships with those persons who are marginalized and live on the fringes of society. As Mary proclaimed in her *Magnificat* so too we affirm the fact that we are servants of the Lord and we humbly accept our role in the plan of salvation history.

VMY, the time is now! With these words we go out to encounter the incarnated Son of God and we share in the enthusiasm, the joy and the love of the people of God. At this time of the Nativity, God becomes one with us and invites us to speak on his behalf as we begin a new year. We are entrusted with the responsibility of proclaiming throughout the world the Good News of the Christmas Season.

May the messianic arrival strengthen the faith, hope and charity of the members of the VMY because it is these three virtues that enable us to live the charism of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Let us continue to be an example to others! Let us be men and women who are quick to act and eager to evangelize the poor, *our lords and masters!*

Together we can make things better!!!



Bienvenu Fouda
INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER

CAMPAIGN...



"Give a little!" This is the theme of the self-financing campaign which the International Council is promoting as a result of the lines of action that were delineated during our Third General Assembly. At the present time the revenue of the International Association is dependent upon the generosity of the General Council of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity. We wish to change this situation so that we, ourselves, finance our international activities. In order to accomplish this objective we have proposed raising a large sum of money so that we can support the Vincentian Marian Youth Association during the next twenty-five years. This is an ambitious program and we need everyone's collaboration. We believe that now is the time to take this important step. Thus this becomes the time to leave our small enclosed world and open new horizons.

The logo of this campaign is an expression of dynamism, autonomy and enthusiasm. The colors are bright and strong and represent the youthful power of our Association. Beside the motto and the monogram of the VMY there are five stars that represent the different continents. The logo cries out, vibrates and wants to awaken in us a renewed commitment.

AMERICA...

Brazil:

Now that their National Statutes have been approved, the Association is unifying their terminology with other countries and so the Association is now called Juventude Mariana Vicentina and not Juventude Marial Vicentina. In November the lay members of the National Council (Clarissa and Bruno) participated respectively in the Provincial Assemblies of Fortaleza and Belo Horizonte.

Mexico:

November 18-20, 2011 Yasmine Cajuste (International President) and Argelys Vega (International Councilor) visited the Association in Mexico on the occasion of their National Assembly which marked the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Vincentian Marian Youth --- the Son and Daughters of Mary in Mexico. Among others who were present at this gathering were: Sister Graciela Rubio, DC (Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity) and Father Silviano Calderon Soltero (Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission).

Central America:

From October 24 – November 14, 2011 the International Councilor, Argelys Vega, visited the Association in Central America with the intention of becoming more aware of the situation of the Association in this area. She also wanted to encourage the members to deepen their identity as members of the Vincentian Marian Youth Association.

Nicaragua: In addition to visiting the members in Leon, Granada, Indira, Boaco and Managua, Argelys participated in the Second National Meeting of the VMY which was held in the Minor Seminary, Saint Vincent de Paul, located in Boaco.

El Salvador: Argelys visited the communities of Ahuachapán and Laguna Seca. Her visit concluded with a gathering of the members during which time she spoke about the identity of the members of the VMY.

Guatemala: Argelys visited four communities of the VMY in the capital and three other communities in Chiquimula. These are large groups and their members are committed to the pastoral ministry in their parishes.

Each visit concluded with a meeting with the National Council of each country during which Argelys was able to offer recommendations and respond to question. We are grateful to all the advisors and National Councils who made this visit possible.

Haiti:

On November 28th the members of the VMY celebrated the feast of the Miraculous Medal in the parish that bears the same name. In the afternoon the older members of the Association, 25 persons, reflected on ways to encourage and organize the younger 195 members. On December 18th, 2011 there will be a formation session for the members of the local council and this same theme will be discussed and reflected upon.

EUROPE...

Portugal: In September a new Council was elected for the Southern Region and their term of office extends from 2011 to 2014. In October and November this new team visited the local councils.

On December 8th two new members were incorporated into the Association. Another two members renewed their commitment during the celebration of the Eucharist which took place in Alferrade.

Ukraine and Belorussia: On September 9-11 the coordinating team gathered together for the first time in Kiev to evaluate and plan their activities for the coming year.

Czech Republic: October 27-30 a retreat was sponsored for the Marian Family in Svaty Hostyn. Thirty one persons participated. The group, guided by the perspective of Vincent de Paul, reflected on family values.

Slovenia: On October 29th Petra Hribar was elected as National President of the VMY.

Greece: On October 30th there was a gathering to celebrate the second anniversary of the establishment of the Association in Greece.

Croatia: Thanks to the members of the VMY in Slovenia and the seminarians of the Congregation of the Mission, the Association is coming to life with much strength in Croatia. Three groups have been formed in just a few months and there is the possibility for further growth in the future.

Italy: On November 27th there was a national gathering of the Association in Naples. The theme of this meeting was: *Let us share the dream, the gift of the mission.*

On November 13, Ghislain Atmezing (International Councilor) and Father Pavol Noga (International sub-director) visited the VMY in Naples, meeting with the members of the different groups and the National Council.

ASIA...

Philippines: In November in the Philippines (the largest group in the world) there were elections for the National Council which now will be led by Joshua Albarina.

India: November 28-29 there was a meeting of the advisors and the young men and women who desire to become members of the VMY. This occurred in Southern India and at the same meeting plans were made to better coordinate the activities throughout the country.

Vietnam: In October the National Council met to evaluate their work and plan for the coming year. During the last quarter 89 young people made their promise and 9 made their Marian Consecration. The VMY in the Region of Duyen Hai celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of their foundation.

AFRICA...



Kenya: On September 3rd, seven members of the VMY made their Marian Consecration during the celebration of the Eucharist.



Algeria: On December 5th the VMY in Algeria came together to plan for a weekend of formation and for their General Assembly which will take place on December 16-18 in Oran. The theme for their assembly is: Vincentian, a lifestyle for today. Among their various plans is the establishment of a new Secretariat.



Uganda: In light of the initiation of the self-financing campaign the VMY in Uganda has organized a week long course in baking.



Cameroon: December is the month for a formation session for the members of the VMY. The members from the Central Region came together on December 16-19 in the Sacred Heart Center in Goya and reflected on the theme: Mary: a model of faith and the Mother of the Church. We hope that this time of reflection will provide an opportunity for the members of the VMY to know more deeply the founder of our Association

T E S T I M O N Y ! V M Y U S A

MISSION BOX EXPERIENCE - October 2011...



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sleep outside in a cardboard box? It may be a hot, sticky night or cold and raining. The ground underneath could be damp and chilled, but most definitely it would be hard and uncomfortable. A bag filled with your only belongings may be the pillow where you lay your head. Twenty-eight members of Vincentian Marian Youth recently spent the night in a box to raise money for the homeless and those in need. Participants in the Mission Box Experience began by "begging" for donations and brought their own box to the event. The money they raised will be used to purchase windows for the home of a local woman in need. Also, they will purchase and donate a van to a needy person for his transportation for his job. The remainder of the money will go towards other VMY encounters to give further aid to the poor. "It was embarrassing and uncomfortable to have to beg for money from people. It made you realize that begging is some-

thing you may never get used to even when you have to do it to survive," said one of the youth.

Begging and sleeping in the box all night helped them to have more empathy for those less fortunate than themselves. St. Vincent taught the example of hands reaching out to others with love and compassion. The Mission Box Experience gives a glimpse of being on the receiving end of that hand.

"It helped us to see those around us who are in need. Sometimes we just go about our lives without noticing someone whom we should be serving."

Vincentian Marian Youth is an outreach program for youth groups with a focus on service to the poor. We offer several mission trips throughout the year for all youth groups to participate in together.

The 28 youth who participated in Missouri were from Ste. Genevieve, Perry and Cape County. Another VMY group in Bloomington, Illinois, also shared in a Mission Box Experience. The two groups together raised over \$8000 in money to serve the poor.

We would like to thank all of those who donated to this wonderful experience for our youth. Several area businesses and individuals were "absentee box dwellers" with their sponsorship donations.

Lynn Davis
VMY United States

"Christmas is not a time, it is a person, a child, the small Son of God that continues to seek where he will be born. Offer him a place in your heart and you will know the true meaning of Christmas"

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !



SPIRITUALITY

CELEBRATING WITH OUR GOD WHO IS NEAR TO US...

As Catholic Christians we once again celebrate the incredible, wonderful reality of a God who became man, a poor man, a beggar for our love. This mystery of the Incarnation, which we remember in a special way on the feast of the Nativity, is in reality lived anew during the celebration of every Eucharist.

Yes, each day, and in a special way on Sunday, the Lord's Day, we gather together as a Christian community in order to receive Jesus who becomes present and near to us in the form of Eucharistic bread. In each Eucharist, the God who became man offers himself to us as nourishment, the source of charity and hope. God becomes present but are we aware of this presence which is more than a physical presence? Are we aware of what is happening so that during the Eucharist we can make an offering of ourselves and allow God to transform our minds and hearts? For it is only in this way that we are illuminated as we reflect on our work, on the situation of our sisters and brothers and on our own lives.

Is the Eucharist a sign of our Catholic identity? Is the Eucharist the center of our life? In my country Sunday is when it becomes very easy to identify Catholic families because they dress in special clothing to participate in the Eucharist. Thus the Holy Mass is not only a spiritual activity proper to Catholics but is a sacrament that summarizes the meaning of life.

At Christmas we reflect on a poor baby, asleep in a manger with a tender smile. There the sacrament of the Eucharist began ... the gift of bread broken in order to nourish humankind. As Christians we joyfully celebrate our salvific event, our liberation from sin. Many generations awaited this event and today we have the privilege and the joy of being able to reflect on this mystery. Will we allow God to be present in our midst during this Christmas season or will we become concerned about countless other activities (parties, gifts, food) and therefore Christmas comes and goes without our being aware of the fact that God was waiting for us?

Let us attempt to be present to every moment and to every person. Let us recognize the Son of God in those persons who need us at this time of the year. Know that with God we can be true human persons who are fully present to the world. Let us live this Christmas Season in an intense manner! Let us celebrate each Eucharist (a little Christmas in our daily pilgrimage) in an intense manner! Today more than ever the world needs the joy and the hope that Jesus offers during this Christmas Season and in every Eucharist.

Anh Thu - INTERNATIONAL COUNCILOR



COUNCIL AND SECRETARIAT

INTERNACIONAL...

- The Director General confirmed the following appointments: **Sister Mariana Kušnieriková, DC** (advisor in Slovakia), **Sister Maria Margarete Pirola Gomes, DC** (advisor in Portugal), **Sister Irma López de Santiago** (advisor in Mexico), **Sister Maria Uberdina Malpartida Ortega, DC** (advisor in Peru) and **Emilia Ramos Colana** (President, Peru).
- Father General has approved the following National Statutes: **VMY Nicaragua** (November 2011) and **VMY Chile** (December 2011)
- November 9-12 Ghislain Atmezing (International Councilor) and Father Pavol Noga (International sub-director) participated in a **Congress in Vatican City**. The theme of this gathering was: The Pope and the Catholic European Volunteers.
- On December 13th representatives of the **Secretariat and the VMY in Spain** met in order to discuss the self-financing campaign.
- The volunteers at the International Secretariat participated in the **Missionary Formation Course** of the VMY in Spain 2011-2012.
- In this edition of the International Bulletin we wish to welcome our **new international volunteer** from Cameroon, **Biennu Fouda Abouna** who will be coordinating activities with the French speaking members of our Association. He arrived in Madrid on November 17th.
- We take advantage of this opportunity to invite other young men or women to live this special experience as a volunteer. If you are able to speak and understanding English (fluently) **then become a VMY volunteer at the International Secretariat**. Contact us at: paulusjmv@gmail.com.



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