

OZANAM NETWORK



Issue N° 2-2017

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International General Council - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

The importance of President General's international trips



As all Vincentians know, it is written in the Statutes of our Confederation (points 3.1 and 3.2) that the President General is the representative of the SSVP to Church and all international organizations, and also symbolizes the bond of unity and moral authority among all the Vincentians in the world. In other words, the President General represents the unity of the SSVP around the globe.

One of the responsibilities of CGI is to enliven and hold together all the Councils, the special works and the Conferences around the world. To carry out this task, it is recommended that the President General visits the countries where the SSVP is present, with the support of the other members of the international board. These international journeys are fundamental to unite nations especially with the messages of Ozanam, Bailly and other co-founders. Such trips are only possible thanks to the partnership and collaboration with the Superior Councils.

In March of 2017, I visited seven nations namely Italy, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and Chile, and was privileged to see up close the strength of the Vincentian movement.

It was a wonderful experience to spend time with the members, learning about the different realities of the local SSVP and being given the opportunity to communicate the message of unity, charity, peace, friendship and evangelization which are the core values and fundamental mission of the President General.

Wherever I went, in the events I attended, in all the Conferences, projects and Councils I visited, and in all the members I've met, I could see that the Vincentian is basically the same everywhere despite the difference in customs, language and culture.

I thank God for allowing me to visit these countries and to see at first hand the remarkable Vincentian works being done there, long may it continue, with God's help. I thank God for these opportunities, and I thank all Superior Councils for receiving me so well. I felt I was at home.

I also deeply appreciate the generosity of the Superior Councils in meeting the various expenses of my visit such as accommodation, food, travel and other costs. Without these generous support, the visit to these nations would not have been possible.

I sincerely hope that my visit will be recognized in the future as an important milestone in the development of the relationship between the Council General and all National Councils. In February 2018, my plans are to visit Africa, according to a program that will be released soon.

Brother Renato Lima de Oliveira
16th President General

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The Annual Meeting of SSVP leaders took place in Paris from June, 13th to 18th



For 5 days, the representatives of the SSVP around the world presented a report on their first year of work.

On 13 June 2017, the Annual Assembly of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul kicked off with the meeting of the International Territorial Vice-Presidents (ITVPs). It was the first time that the new team had met for an international meeting since the start of the term of office of Renato Lima de Oliveira, 16th President General, which also became an opportunity for the ITVPs to present their progress reports on the first 10 months of their work. All the meetings were covered by Ozanam TV, a Brazilian web TV channel (www.ozanam.tv), of which some were broadcasted live on the Ozanam TV facebook page. Ozanam TV is now part of the Communications Commission's structure assigned for video coverage of important events as well as creation of video documentaries and materials.

It was this tough and experienced team who welcomed the Annual

Assembly participants at the first day of the meeting: the 12 International Territorial Vice-Presidents, of whom 9 are new to their roles. Joseph Pandian, former ITVP for Asia and the current Vice-President General, welcomed them in his opening address to the meeting. Joseph Makwinja, 2nd Deputy Vice-President handling the International Structure and, himself,

a former ITVP for Africa 2, stated: "These international meetings have always given me much inspiration for continuing my mission with greater strength and renewed energy". Basile Ondigui Fouda, Vice-President for the International Structure who is also a former ITVP for Africa 3, added: "We wish you the very best! Being an ITVP is not a promotion but a call for service..."

Over subsequent days, the international meeting proceeded productively with the works of the Permanent Section, the International Executive Committee, the International Council General Board and the Concordat. Rev. Fr. Robert Maloney C.M, Spiritual Adviser to the CGI, led the daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Winds of change

The election of Renato Lima de Oliveira to the position of President General in June 2016 heralded a change of direction and this trend
(continued) page 4)



Renato Lima de Oliveira (PGI) - Joseph Pandian (Vice PG)

(continued from page 3) has been confirmed in the first 10 months of his term. Since he took up his post last September, the 16th President General has initiated a number of innovations starting with the reorganisation of the International Structure. The new organisational chart includes among other things: 3 posts of Deputy Vice-Presidents who coordinate the work of Commission Chairmen and Vice Presidents, new Commissions, the post of mediator (Marie-Françoise Salésiani Payet - Ombudswoman General), and a new territorial zone: Oceania, now led by Frank Brassil (Australia).

This reorganisation allows the President General, who has a professional job as well, to delegate some of his workload and be represented at various levels of the international structure.

Work in progress

Renato Lima de Oliveira's 20-point programme, aimed at improving the work of the International Council General, is already being implemented commencing with the following initiatives:

- **Restoring** direct contact with the Vincentians at the grassroots by resuming the annual circular messages, continuing and improving the newsletters, and broadcasting video messages on special occasions like Christmas.
- **Deepening** of our spiritual life with the publication of the weekly spiritual readings and reflections available on the international website, and the proposed community prayer on the 10th, 20th and 30th of every month, for all those who share the Vincentian charism.
- **Support** for the work of the Commission for the Canonisation of Frédéric Ozanam with the examination of new cases which may be considered as miracles.
- **Development** of Global Vincentian training and formation, adding new modules and having them translated into other languages.
- **Creation** of a Commission for the examination and discussion

on the canonical status, which has already been debated in Rome in June 2016.

CIAD (International Commission for Aid and Development), which is one of the principal tools of the International Council General in the field of international aid, has been redeployed in 3 main areas of work: emergency aid, development aid, and support for SSVP development. Bertrand Ousset, President of the Commission, has also emphasised the need to change the system for allocating donations: "Every year, a large number of natural and humanitarian disasters which devastate regions or entire countries go completely unnoticed by the general public, with no media attention, leaving their people in utter distress. Council General has, therefore, decided to create an International Solidarity Fund, specifically to collect donations without a particular allocation, which would enable CIAD to respond to the many requests for help it receives during the year".

New areas of action

The start of this term of office has been marked not just by the reorganisations, but also by the implementation of several initiatives affecting all levels of the Society. This is done so we can respond to the main challenge facing the SSVP, through its 184 years of existence: to remain faithful to the past while shaping the future. According to Renato Lima de Oliveira, the Society's historic legacy must be rediscovered and enhanced. This was demonstrated by the commencement of the thematic years, 2017 being the year of Emmanuel Bailly, a tribute to the first President General. Subsequent years will be devoted to the other founders, who are less known to the Vincentians as compared to Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. In addition to this, an International Commission for historic investigation has been formed to support the research work.

Alongside these initiatives, the

International Council General has entered this new 5-year term with some basic questions: what are its strategies, vision, and mission going to be? In order to start the discussions on this, Eduardo Almeida Marques, Vice President for Strategic Plan, turned to the Vincentians by launching a survey for all the members of the Society covering the essential values of the SSVP in the eyes of the members themselves. The final results of the survey were shared already but the final form of the Strategic Plan will be completed by July.

"New media for an old kingdom"

With its rich historical legacy, its values and its faithfulness to the Vincentian charism, the SSVP also has to look to the future and be relevant to the signs of the times. Karl Michael Hila, Chairman of the Communication Commission explained: "The Vincentian story needs to be told with fresh vigor, new beauty and modern technology". It needs to adapt how it communicates and modernise its tools, including the website which will be redesigned, along with a new international logo intended to harmonise all the SSVP logos around the world.

Conference life will also be an area to work on. It is now vital for the International Council General to have a better view of the precise state of the presence of the SSVP in the world. For this, the President General has launched a re-aggregation plan, addressed at the moment to the countries with the fewest conferences, which will help update our membership database. This plan will provide more reliable figures on existing conferences, those in abeyance or those which have simply disappeared. It will also be a working base for the SSVP+ project, which involves encouraging the development of the Society in countries where it has no presence.

Intensifying our relationships

Given the observation that an international NGO such as the SSVP cannot work alone, connections have been made this year with other organisations such as the Order of Malta in France, Vincentian Marian Youth, and the International Red Cross. These networks will lead to partnership agreements. The SSVP is also strengthening its presence at the United Nations by regular participation in ECOSOC meetings, as well as on the Human Rights Council.

These meetings and presentations provided an outline statement of this first year and revealed the progress made by the SSVP, as well as the many work that are still to be done. The participants regretted the lack of time given to crucial topics such as aggregations or canonical status, and asked for these subjects to be discussed at Annual Assemblies, in order to have deeper discussions without being restricted by time constraints.

The final day was spent retracing the steps of St. Vincent de Paul and Bl. Frederic Ozanam, visiting Vincentian places in Paris such as the building

where the very first meeting was held in April 1833 close to the Church of Saint Sulpice, the Chapel of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Church of Saint Joseph-des-Carmes where the crypt holds the tomb of Frédéric Ozanam, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal... symbolic places, which many of the participants were seeing for the first time.

The next day, everyone left to return home after 5 days filled with a wealth of meetings, discussions and inspirations.



Basile Ondigui Fouda



Johnson Varghese



Erwin Tigla



William Alves

Visit by Joseph Pandian to France: in the footsteps of Emmanuel Bailly

During his stay, the new SSVP Vice-President General visited the tomb of one of the founders of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

In April, Joseph Pandian, Vice President General of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul came to France for his first official visit since taking up his post in September 2016. His visit began with the National Council of France, to meet Xavier de Carmantrand, President of the International Commission, then Michel Lanternier, National President, with whom he had some fruitful discussions. The 2 French officers then accompanied him to some iconic Vincentian sites, such as the tombs of Sister Rosalie Rendu, Amélie Ozanam and Charles Ozanam at the Montparnasse cemetery.

One of the integral points in the strategic plan for his term of office, explained by Renato Lima de Oliveira, 16th President General, is to revive the historic legacy of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, as well as the life and work of its co-founders, in addition to Ozanam, who is already well-known. So in his circular letter distributed in January, the President General declared that 2017 would be the "Year of Bailly".

So on this occasion, Joseph Pandian, together with other Vincentians representing the SSVP around the world, went to Bertheaucourt-lès-thennes, a small village 140 km north-east of Paris, to visit the tomb and honour the memory of one of the founders and first President General, Emmanuel Joseph Bailly de Surcy.

The cemetery of Lès Thennes is behind the church, which is dedicated to Saint-Vaast de Moreuil and the tomb is to the right of the entrance to the cemetery. This is the family tomb of Bailly's parents-in-law: the Vrayet de Surcy family. Several family members are buried here, along with Bailly. On the stone cross are engraved the words "Spes Unica" (referring to the cross itself on the grave, meaning: "the cross, our only hope"). There are family names engraved on the stone slab, some of which have worn away over the years. Visitors need to take a brush to clean the surface of the tomb, in order to decipher the inscriptions. It is possible to read: "Emmanuel Joseph Bailly de Surcy", and with more difficulty: "First (?) President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul". The year of birth is illegible, but that of his death, 1861, is clearer.

On 20 July 1830, in this same parish, at the age of 36,

Emmanuel married Marie-Apolline Sidonie Vrayet de Surcy, 25 years old. His father-in-law was concerned to preserve the family name, and so he added his wife's name to his own, being known as Emmanuel Bailly de Surcy, instead of Emmanuel Bailly Fauquenois, his mother's name. They had six children, three boys and three girls. Two of his sons became priests (Vincent de Paul and Benjamin), and were active members of the SSVP in Paris; Vincent de Paul Bailly was also the third Superior General of the Assumptionist Fathers; he is currently under consideration for beatification.

Emmanuel died in Paris on 12 April 1861, at the age of 67, and was initially buried in the Montparnasse cemetery, but subsequently his wife wished to transfer his remains to the family tomb at Bertheaucourt-lès-thennes.

As well as being the co-founder of SSVP and its first president, Bailly was an outstanding figure of the Catholic community in France in the 19th century, and the whole of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul should be familiar with his life and the humanitarian work of this admirable fellow member.

While in Paris the Vice-President General also took the opportunity to find out about the daily work of the team in the International Office, spending some time talking with each member in order to understand their role and tasks. He is also involved in preparing for the General Assembly in June, which this year will be held in Paris.

After this 4-day visit, with a packed programme, our fellow member Joseph Pandian returned to India, to prepare for his return in June for his first annual meeting as Vice-President General of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.



SSVP International Youth Day

On the 4th of July, the Vincentians are invited to celebrate the presence of Youth in the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.



Since it was created, the SSVP has had the presence of young people; in fact, it was created by young people.

The SSVP is an opportunity for young Catholics to achieve holiness through the Vincentian Charisma, following the steps of St. Vincent de Paul and Blessed Frederic Ozanam and his colleagues.

Therefore, it is very important to have an international day to celebrate the presence of Youth in our organization and remind us of the original spirit in which Ozanam and his colleagues, inspired by the Holy Spirit, began the work to restore the dignity of the poor.

The Vincentian Youth should have a special space in our Councils, Conferences, they should be heard and have the right to speak, expose their opinions, dreams and desires. The SSVP should keep in its whole structure the spirit of joviality, creativity, boldness and availability, which are strong characteristics of young people.

About the 4th of July

The 4th of July is the liturgical day of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. He was a young Vincentian who actively experienced the Vincentian Charisma in Turin. The poor people always had a significant place in Frassati's life, from his childhood to youth. Pope John Paul II, at the beatification mass, highlighted Pier Giorgio Frassati as the young man of the Beatitudes and considered him as a model for the young people who love Jesus Christ and the poor.

Then, we have chosen the 4th of July to honour Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati and we have decided to call him the Patron of the Youth and Children of the SSVP. May we, young people, see in the life and works of Frassati a model of holiness to follow, and realize that it is possible to actively experience the youth and at the same time actively experience the Vincentian Charisma.

Frassati used to say: "I give back the gift of life to God, serving the poor and having good friends." All young

Vincentians should follow this idea, that is, serve the poor, experience the Vincentian Charisma, and have friends.

Let's be creative and inventive, the important thing is to have a well remembered and celebrated 4th of July and the week that includes this date with all the Brothers and Sisters around the world, and especially the Youth and the Children.

Share how the 4th of July was celebrated in your location: you can send an e-mail and pictures to the International Vice President for the Youth, Children and Teenagers: cgi.ivp-youth@ssvpglobal.org.

You can also send pictures and information to our official pages on social media:

Facebook: [SSVPYouthInternational](#)
Instagram : [ssvpyouth_cgi](#)

Fraternally,

Willian Alves

International Vice President for the Youth, Children and Teenagers

Proposed activities to celebrate the 4th of July

All SSVP Councils, all Youth Conferences and Commissions are invited to organize activities to celebrate this day. Activities below can be held on the 4th of July or the week that includes this date (end of week, before or after).

- > A party to promote the integration of youth and other Vincentians.
- > Dissemination of the SSVP and the presence of the Youth in the SSVP.
- > A day dedicated to praying with the Youth; the rosary or a special prayer may be used for the Youth of the SSVP.
- > A meeting to discuss the reality of the young people, spirituality and the role/importance of young people for the SSVP.
- > Games among young people (sports, leisure, tours).
- > Dissemination of the SSVP on social media, highlighting the presence of young people.
- > SSVP recruitment of young people (at churches, parishes, and communities).
- > A mass to celebrate the presence of Youth in the SSVP.

A call for Prayer on the 10th, 20th and 30th of the month



On the occasion of the International General Council Meeting last June 14-16th, a new program was launched proposing a common prayer for all those who share in the Vincentian vocation: in the year when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima (May 13th to October 13th), the 400th anniversary of the Vincentian Charism (September 27th) and the 20th anniversary of Ozanam's beatification (August 22nd).

The spirit of this program is to motivate each member of the SSVP to take 15 minutes every 10th, 20th and 30th day of each month to ask the intercessions of our Lady of Fatima, St. Vincent and Bl. Ozanam for the prayer intentions of the poor, for ourselves, for our families and for the other members of the SSVP.

May our prayers serve to commit ourselves more fully to the Lord, through the spiritual union of all members of the SSVP and our families, along with the Poor, "our masters", as Saint Vincent de Paul used to say.

The prayers are accessible on the CGI's website, in the news section :

<http://en.ssvpglobal.org/News/CGI-news/A-call-for-Prayer-on-the-10th-20th-and-30th-of-the-month>

The healing of a patient entrusted to the Intercession of Frederic Ozanam

In a message sent to the International General Council, Fr. Jean-Marie Dubois, Promoter of the Causes of Saints for the Diocese of Paris, informs us that he asked to pray, through the intercession of Blessed Frederic Ozanam, for François-Xavier, a cancer patient. "*I wish that all the friends of Frédéric Ozanam share this intent widely,*" he concludes.

In response to this request, the General Council launches a prayer chain and invites Vincentians from all over the world to recite the prayer to Blessed Ozanam every day by naming the favor that is desired: the healing of François-Xavier



Prayer: In the hope of obtaining a miracle through his intercession

Lord,

You made Blessed Frédéric Ozanam a witness of the Gospel, full of wonder at the mystery of the Church.

You inspired him to alleviate poverty and injustice and endowed him with untiring generosity in the service of all who were suffering.

In family life, he revealed a most genuine love as a son, brother, husband and father.

His vision for our society was a network of charity encircling the world and he instilled St Vincent de Paul's spirit of love, boldness and humility.

His prophetic social vision appears in every aspect of his short life, together with the radiance of his virtues.

We thank you Lord, for those many gifts and we ask, if it is your will, the healing of François-Xavier, through the intercession of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

May the Church proclaim his holiness, as a saint, a providential light for today's world!

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

The Vincentian Family at the UN

Representatives of the Vincentian Family at the United Nations in Geneva (Daughters of Charity and Society of Saint Vincent de Paul) took part in the 34th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2017.



The session focused particularly on the situation in Syria, and renewed the mandate of the international commission of enquiry on fighting impunity.

The main task of the representatives of the Vincentian Family in these international bodies is to attend meetings, providing a link and working closely with United Nations representatives.

As we know, through its work the Vincentian Family endeavours to respond to many of the objectives it

shares with the United Nations: to eradicate poverty throughout the world, protect the dignity of suffering people, promote peace and justice in the world and make the voice of the poor heard at an international level. Through its presence at the United Nations, the Vincentian Family tries to achieve these objectives.

What is the Human Rights Council?

The Human Rights Council is the leading inter-governmental organisation responsible for human rights. It consists of 192 member states of the UN, of which 47 have voting rights. All members of the Council meet three times a year in Geneva, Switzerland. The Council's role is to strengthen the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural, including the right to self-development. The member states of the Council are elected for a period of three years, and are the only ones able to vote.

Only NGOs with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC), like the Vincentian Family, can be accredited to attend sessions of the Human Rights Council.

Sr Monique Javouhey (Daughters of Charity) and Marie-Françoise Salesiani Payet (SSVP)
Representatives of the Vincentian Family at the UN (Geneva)

Invitation: A symposium in Roma (Italy) 12th - 15th October 2017

This year, we celebrate the 400th anniversary of our Vincentian charism. On this occasion, the Vincentian Family organizes an International Symposium in Rome from 12th to 15th October 2017 where all members of the Vincentian Family are invited. This event is open to all.

Father Tomaz Mavric, General Superior Of the Congregation of the Mission, send a letter to all the Vincentian organisations, starting with these words : *"It is with great joy that I invite*

you to come to Rome on the weekend of October 12 – 15, 2017 for a Vincentian Family Symposium. Our Jubilee theme "Welcome the Stranger" is the focus of this event. The Symposium goes from Thursday

(for registration only) through Sunday, 1:00 PM." Details for the Symposium are available on the FAMVIN's website here above :

www.famvin.org



Nepal, 2 years after the deadly earthquake, the SSVP takes an active part in reconstruction.

On 26 April, Nepal commemorated the victims of the 2 earthquakes which wiped dozens of villages from the map 2 years ago, and plunged the country into mourning.



Over these two years, the general situation of the victims has gradually improved: reconstruction is slow, hindered by logistical problems, such as lack of equipment and human resources, and power cuts. There have been delays in restoring the infrastructure, including the road network, needed to resume operations, and some villages are still cut off from the world.

A partnership with Caritas

After taking an active part in the rescue efforts immediately after the disaster, the regional officers of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul quickly initiated a partnership with Caritas, in order to improve efficiency on the ground, and overcome administrative obstacles. With an agreement signed in June 2016, Caritas and the SSVP are working together on a project to rebuild houses. According to this agreement, the SSVP is committed to a budget of \$772,000, funded by CIAD (International Commission for Aid and Development), gathered from Vincentian donations for the victims.

With agreement from the Nepalese government, Caritas has identified a zone particularly affected by the second earthquake on 12 May 2015, in terms of human loss and destruction: the village development communities of Orang and Bulung, in the Dolakha district, particularly targeting the 5 worst affected areas. The project involves 310 families, who will be materially and financially assisted to rebuild their homes.

In each district, a reconstruction committee has been formed to supervise the programme. The beneficiaries

are closely involved: they are helping to resolve problems which arise within the community, identifying households rebuilding their homes and those who are not.

A demonstration house has been erected, meeting earthquake-proof regulations, to provide a model. Training sessions have been organised for the builders and the households receive help from a Caritas Nepal technician who provides expertise in key areas of the reconstruction (choice of site, drawings, etc.).

Malaysian support

Twinned with Nepal, Malaysia mobilised and a visit had been organised from the first days after the disaster. The National Council and regional leaders have launched several initiatives to assist the victims. Among them: a solidarity appeal in order to raise funds, collect clothing and goods for the Nepalese to protect them from cold while they are waiting for their houses to be rebuilt. A recent visit to the country was arranged to meet Nepalese Vincentians and to obtain a better assessment of needs. This trip, led by Elizabeth Loo (National Twinning Coordinator for Malaysia) took place in September 2016. The week-long programme included a training session and visits to families in Kathmandu, Godavari and Baniyatar, giving the Vincentians an overview of how the funds have been used. They also brought woollen clothing, computer equipment and the sum of 13,600 RM (3100 USD) raised from collections. The visitors quickly took the measure of the level of poverty and deprivation suffered by their Nepalese counterparts, as well as as the extraordinary commitment they show towards others. Anne Haslam (Christ the King conference – Sungai Petanie, Malaysia) found it a richly rewarding experience: *“At the outset we thought we could teach our Nepalese friends something, but we quickly realised that the roles were reversed, and it was we who had most to learn from them. From the first day of our arrival in Kathmandu, it was a humbling and learning process. We were filled with humility and inspired all the more to serve people less fortunate than ourselves”*.

In a country where Catholics are very much a minority (8000 out of a population of 30 million) the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul presently has 13 conferences, and is increasing its service to the poor, with the support of Malaysia and its collaborative work with other Catholic organisations.

SSVP France : a joint competition to fight against poverty

On 31 March, the competitors for the “Innovate for solidarity” prize met at the offices of Ulule, the leading crowdfunding site.



Launched by SSVP France last September, this competition aims to raise awareness of the fight against poverty in France as well as making the SSVP better known. The competition is aimed at students in higher education, encouraging them to reflect on social enterprise projects for combating all forms of poverty, in France or abroad: whether material (poor housing, unemployment, food, sickness, etc.), or emotional (loneliness, isolation).

Michel Lanternier, National President, SSVP France, says, “this competition aims to place the intelligence and generosity of young people at the service of those in need”. This is a meaningful dynamic, echoing the first comments made by Michel Lanternier in his opening speech, talking about the founders of the Society: “Saint Vincent de Paul was a bold and innovative man. He was one of the first people to entrust women with administrative work, very rarely done at that time. [...] Frédéric Ozanam wanted to found a Society of young people for young people”. Then, recalling the statistics for 2016 in France: 310,000 home visits, 13 million meals distributed (equivalent to 6500 tons of food supplies), and 165,000 people cared for.

9 groups of students (from a shortlist) each gave a 6-minute presentation of their project. From solar lighting for Burkina Faso, water filters to combat disease in Sri Lanka, a community kitchen to help integration of refugees and cultural exchange through to a social housing scheme using empty office space...there was no shortage of ingenuity among the candidates. As for the projects, they had to meet 5 criteria in order to convince the jury :

- Innovative nature of the project
- Social impact
- Economic viability
- Team involvement
- Ability to implement

After the 9 projects had been introduced, Raphaëlle Menajovsky (chair of Webassoc), Jean Marc Potdevin (founder of the Entourage network, event sponsor), Bertrand Decoux (general secretary of SSVP France) and Nicolas Fekete (chair of the Suzanne Michaux foundation) took nearly half an hour to come to their decision.

After congratulating all participants, the jury awarded first prize to the mobile app “Infomeless”, intended to “give useful information to those who need it”. An innovative information platform, Infomeless aims to help in the social integration of people living on the street and refugees, by providing them with as much useful information as possible (on housing, benefits, hostels in Paris, food banks, etc.).

More information about the Infomeless project : <http://www.infomeless.fr/> @infomeless (TW)

More information about SSVP France: www.ssvp.fr



A ray of light falls on the Vincentian mission in Egypt

A reflection of Ella Bitar, International Territorial Vice President, following her visit in Egypt.

A ray of light falls on the Vincentian mission in Egypt.

A visit by a Vincentian to a person in need brings the message of Jesus and joy to the heart.

A visit by a CGI member to a country gives courage to the Vincentians and the oxygen they need to continue their work. Egypt, a country in North Africa, has a population of 92 million, of whom 2 million are Christians.

The Christians are scattered throughout the country, struggling to exist, fighting to bear a quiet witness to Christ in an increasingly radicalised Muslim environment.



They are thirsty for news of our network of charity, they want to learn and find out more.

They want to know how they too can be part of this global

chain of charity. Each of them is weaving their own strand of this great tapestry, ignorant of the same work going on all over the world. We have a heavy Vincentian burden to carry, but it is lightened by the presence of Christ.

Giving food, warmth, care and friendship to those in need are the finest acts of love a Christian can do! In Egypt, Vincentians are always present, ready to serve their brothers and sisters in need bringing comfort with a smile. Despite their meagre resources, they are generous in mutual help. So for instance, in the Aswan conference, an appeal for clothing, shoes and other items benefited 250 families who received help in exchange for one Egyptian coin.

The clothing had been sorted, washed and ironed at home by young Vincentians.

With the proceeds of the sale, the Vincentians bought groceries to give food parcels to the families.

This spread the joy, and everyone was happy.

Oh Lord, send us ever more weavers for our tapestry, and give us one day the grace of seeing our place in it.

Ella Bitar

Obituary

It is with deep sadness that the International Council General learned of the death of Professor Gérard Cholvy at the age of 85.

Born in Casablanca in 1932, Professor Cholvy spent over twenty years in Morocco before settling down in the city of Montpellier, where he taught contemporary history at Université Paul-Valéry for over 40 years

A famous expert on the history of his region, Professor Cholvy was also recognised, among his peers, as a renowned specialist in French contemporary religious history.

He will always be remembered as the author of the landmark biography of Bl. Frédéric Ozanam, published in 2003 with the title, "Frédéric Ozanam, l'engagement d'un intellectuel catholique au XIXème siècle" [the engagement of a Catholic intellectual in the 19th century]. The book has just been translated into Spanish by the National Council of Spain in 2017. For the bicentenary of Bl. Frédéric's birth (2013), a new edition of this much-read work appeared, in an abridged form for the general public.

In addition to his abilities as a researcher and teacher, Professor Cholvy was very proud to be a Catholic. He had a deep admiration for Bl. Frédéric and considered

him a shining example of the committed intellectual who is engaging, discerning and critical thinker.

In Professor Gérard Cholvy, the Council General has lost a friend of the Society and someone passionate about Bl. Frédéric Ozanam.

We ask for the prayers of all Vincentians around the world for the repose of the soul of this great historian. We also send our sincerest sympathy to his family and friends for their loss.



Professor Gérard Cholvy