



## INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

### 2016 Activity Report and events for the Holy See

#### Introduction

2016 was a busy and eventful year for the Society worldwide: present in some 150 countries, over 800,000 members, helping millions of needy and vulnerable people. Given the present global situation (political and economic problems, disasters, abuses, high levels of unemployment, social exclusion, etc.), there are daunting challenges, but the Society continues to address the problems of the people in need, with a true Vincentian spirit and belief in our mission, with humanitarian enthusiasm and the love of God.

Main activities are highlighted below:

#### 1. Commission for International Aid and Development (CIAD):

The CIAD is an agent of the Council General International (CGI) of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP), whose work focuses on international development, as well as examining and approving requests from National Councils for financial assistance. The Society supports its global mission through the CIAD: international support in natural and political disasters, remediation projects, refugees, self-help and microfinance programmes, education, rebuilding houses, etc., with particular emphasis on the systemic change.

Our services and programmes are aimed at covering the daily needs of the people we help: medical care, housing and support for people traumatised especially by disasters, as they try to return to normality.

##### a. Emergency services and restoration projects.

As regards natural disasters (floods, cyclones, typhoons, earthquakes), wars, political and civil conflict, and epidemic lockdowns, it provided help in around twenty countries, including for refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq, as well as in Europe, as a consequence of the conflicts in the Middle East. Similarly, it carried out other support and remediation projects in Nepal, Bangladesh, Haiti, New Zealand, Italy, Burundi, Central African Republic and South American countries. The aim is to meet everyday needs: clothing, accommodation, medical care, building homes, providing white goods, furniture, etc. As regards remediation, there are programmes which help people to reintegrate into society, through the necessary assessment process, with education and training.

##### b. Development projects

Development projects, which are underway in many parts of the third world, are making good progress. These include training courses, professional guidance, education, support for farming, rural and fishing enterprises, replanting programmes, self-help schemes, micro-finance, etc. Systemic change is actively supported to provide poor people with the capability to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining, so they can have a full, dignified life for themselves and their families.

Help provided in several countries: Russia (educational and social activities), South Sudan (expansion of a furniture workshop), Burkina Faso (professional training in mechanical engineering).

### c. Expansion

The CIAD has two other missions: expansion of the SSVV into other countries, and consolidation of the Society in countries where its presence has become weakened.

## 2. Member training

With so many members, over 800,000, around the world, it is essential to offer them courses to ensure that our members receive the right training to carry out their mission properly. Spiritual formation is another key aspect, so that members embody Vincentian spirituality in living out evangelical values of faith, hope, charity and love. An international team of instructors and trainers ensures the appropriate programmes are developed and delivered.

### a. Global training for all members (since 2015)

This aimed to provide SSVV members worldwide with the same message about the essentials of the Society. The Council General based the development of a universal programme on the experience of several countries already making great progress in this field (Brazil, England & Wales, Italy, Ireland, United States, Canada and France). It created a working group of representatives from these countries and together they produced a PowerPoint presentation with all the topics to be covered. This general programme (available in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic) covers the various areas: general description, history/origins, spirituality, systemic change, visiting those in need, the Rule, Conference life, Vincentian solidarity, etc.

John Lee, Vice-president General for the Structure at that time, asked each of the 11 Vincentian regions to appoint a project coordinator, whose tasks would include helping to implement projects, creating the new project management manual, helping the Society to expand into new countries, and supporting Territorial Vice-presidents to strengthen National Councils.

From 2 to 4 May 2016, a training session was held at the CGI's headquarters in Paris, to help develop this role, attended by eight project coordinators. A PowerPoint presentation covered project management and the CIAD's procedures, mainly addressing monitoring and emergency aid.

## 3. SSVV Youth

- a. The Society pays particular attention to the inclusion of children and young adults, and encourages their active participation in Superior Councils, which will promote the growth, leadership and well-being of the Society.
- b. Participation in World Youth Days 2016 in Krakow, Poland in July, on the programme of the Holy Father Pope Francis on his visit to Poland.
- c. Days organised for World Youth Days, held in Poland, from 23 to 25 July, the World Day of Vincentian Youth.
- d. On 2 September 2016, the 4th International Video-conference for SSVV Youth was held, bringing together young people from all over the world, and the new President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira.
- e. The SSVV Founders' Prize, inspired by the history of the SSVV, founded by young people. A ministry of support for youth recognised the work carried out by young leaders and ministers who contributed to the happiness, success and value of the SSVV's pastoral youth work.

## 4. Communications and webpage

As a global organisation, it is essential to have an effective channel of communication with the members in all countries, and this is possible through the website (available in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese) and the Society's social media. According to web analysis tools, the percentage of users connecting via a mobile device or tablet has doubled in a year, and this figure may well increase. So plans are underway to improve usability and design of the website interface. Similarly, bi-monthly bulletins are published on the web, and a new database has been created, with up-to-date information about the Society's presence in the world.

## 5. Appointment of the new President General

A General Assembly was held in Rome from 5 to 8 June 2016. On 5 June, one of the main topics was the election of the new President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, who will replace Michael Thio and serve for a 6-year term. On 9 September 2016, Renato Lima de Oliveira officially took up his role as 16th President General, at the Lazarist Chapel in Paris, France, and appointed his management Board.

Renato Lima de Oliveira, aged 45, is Brazilian, married to Andrea (in 1997), a journalist and official at Anatel (Brazilian Telecommunications Agency), author of Vincentian books, father of two children (Gustavo and Bianca), and an SSVP member since 1986. He received 70 out of 115 votes at the Assembly (61%). He was International Territorial Vice-president for the America 3 region (South America). He has a 20-point agenda (this can be found on the website). The spiritual adviser, chosen by Renato Lima, is Father Robert Maloney, of the Congregation of the Mission (CM), from the United States. In December, Renato Lima recorded a Christmas message for all the SSVP members around the world.

The motto of President General Renato Lima for his term of office (2016/2022) is as follows: "Anyone who wants to be first, must be the very last of all and servant of all" (Mark 09:35).

## 6. Canonisation of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam

The Society is examining two possible cases for the cause for canonisation of the main founder of the Society, Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. The appropriate investigations are being carried out for this.

## 7. International meetings

### a. Internal

- General Assembly in Rome (Italy), from 5 to 8 June, bringing together members of the SSVP from the 150 National Councils, with the election of the president on 5 June, and the changes to the Rule approved on 6 June.
- Assembly of the America 3 countries, in São Paulo (Brazil), in December.

### b. External

- On 25 and 26 February, presentation given at the invitation of the Vatican and in Vatican City, by the former President General Michael Thio, for the International Congress "Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:8) - Prospects 10 years after the encyclical "Deus Caritas Est". He spoke about the challenges for Catholic organisations in relation to the encyclical. The audience consisted of some members of the Roman Curia, and leaders of various international Catholic charitable organisations.
- From 22 to 24 January, Michael Thio attended the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family in Rome.
- In September, the new President General, Renato Lima de Oliveira, attended the meeting of the Collaboration Commission of the Vincentian Family (Philadelphia, United States).
- In October, meeting of the Vincentian Family's collaborative action programme (Lisbon, Portugal).



## 8. Visits by the President General

The new President General visited Brazil in September, and Portugal and Spain in December.

### Conclusions

We thank God for the blessings he has given to the Society and its members, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Vincent and Blessed Frédéric Ozanam. We will continue our Vincentian mission, with the faith, charism and dedication of our founders, living out the Vincentian virtues of simplicity, humility, joy, enthusiasm and holiness.

Renato Lima thanks all the Vincentians from the various countries and continents who accepted his invitation to join the CGI's management board in various roles, such as advisers, on committees, in departments and in other services, and for the great service provided by the staff at the Paris' head office.

We trust in God and obey. May God bless us.

In our humble service in Christ, I say farewell.

Yours faithfully,



Renato Lima de Oliveira  
16th President General