



# NEWSLETTER

## INTERNATIONAL GENERAL COUNCIL

July/August 2014

### CEI 2014: the SSVP held its annual assembly in Lisbon

This year Portugal hosted the Society's annual event. The National President Antonio Correia and his team worked with dedication and unfailing generosity to provide the best possible working conditions for the SSVP members, some of whom had travelled long distances: Australia, Brazil, United States, Thailand, Zambia, Botswana.

The reception, accommodation and meetings took place in a seminary, 25 km from Lisbon.



The Permanent Section's meeting gave participants an overview of the work of all the commissions and a complete statement on the condition of the Society. Events and situations develop over just one year, leading to an unavoidable change of direction or redefinition of objectives. So the Strategic Plan initiated by Dr. Michael Thio, the President General, at the beginning of his term of office has been regularly revised to ensure the Society is working in the most appropriate way.

The International Executive Committee unanimously approved the operational report, the 2013 accounts, the 2014 budget and the appointment of 5 member countries, invited for 2 years: Canada, Scotland, the Philippines, South Africa and Peru.

### Funding to obtain

During the various meetings, several commission leaders, including CIAD and formation, drew attention to the lack of funds available for them to carry out their

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work properly. CIAD in particular has been dreadfully short of funds. The Vice-President Brian O'Reilly called on the generosity of countries to enable the Commission to continue its work, especially in the field of development. Similarly, after considering the 2013 statement, comments clearly highlighted the need to find further funds for the operation of the CGI, which presently depends on the generosity of the Concordat member countries, whose agreements are renewed for 3 years.

### Progress in the field

In terms of expansion, the Society can celebrate the energy of its members in some regions, such as India, the United States and Brazil. 301 new conferences were aggregated in 2013, a sign of good health, given the age of the Society itself. David Williams, responsible for the Rules and Statutes commission and for aggregations/institutions emphasized the significant progress made, particularly in terms of the compliance of statutes for some countries.

Despite its reduced budget, CIAD has been able to support a number of projects.

The Canonization Process for Blessed Frederic Ozanam seems on track: the case of a new cure, which occurred in 2013 at the Ozanam Medical Centre (Venezuela) will be submitted to the Canonization Commission.

The President General, Dr. Michael Thio, closed the meeting by thanking all those present for their good work. Much information has been exchanged, but there is still much to accomplish. According to a United Nations survey, one third of the world's population is still living below the poverty threshold. This is alarming and a huge challenge for all humanitarian associations across the world. The Society, as a lay, apostolic and Catholic organisation must continue to serve the poor and the vulnerable, sharing God's love and compassion with them.

Read more : [www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)

# Twinning, the Malaysian's experience : from Receiving to Donor country

Malaysia, twinned as receiving country for a long time, has, since 2010, the unique opportunity to live the Vincentian charisma with being Donor country, and share its material resources, a deep friendship, prayers and communion with a much less affluent country : Nepal



'Nepal launches St Vincent De Paul Society' – a heading taken from the Ucanews in July 2010. It was lead by Bro. Joseph Pandian who was then the West Asia Coordinator who formed the first conferences in Nepal. First visit to Nepal made by members of SSVP International were Bro John Lee, Bro. Joseph Pandian and Bro. Gabriel Mondial in March. The following year, Malaysia agreed to be twinned and the journey of partnership begun.

In April 2012, SSVP Malaysia sponsored SSVP Nepal's first Training and Formation Program for 150 participants held in Godavari, near Kathmandu. Nepali members, priests, religious brothers and sisters from different parts of Nepal came for this 2 days program conducted by local and SSVP International members. The Theme "Widow's Mite" was chosen by Nepal's Bishop Anthony F. Sharma who gave a speech at the opening ceremony. A group of delegates from Malaysia led by Bro Dunstan Dominic who was then the National President attended as guests. The Malaysian delegates participated in the breakout sessions with the local members. Visits were also made to the conferences in Kathmandu and Pokhara after the training program. The presence of the Malaysian delegates was to show support and commitment towards the twinning with Nepal.

By the end of 2012, 3 Nepali conferences were aggregated and twinning funds were sent from the

Malaysian National Council. A National Coordinator was appointed for Nepal and concurrently a National Twinning Coordinator for Malaysia to facilitate the needful on the twinning program. The twinning partners had similarities as Nepal is new to the Society, whereas Malaysia is also new to being twinned as an international donor country.

## From Receiving to Donor Country

When ask about 'Twinning', most of the senior members in Malaysia would say that their conferences used to receive twinning fund from their donor country as we were a "receiving country". A change of mindset is needed for us with the changing role.

Plans of another visit to Nepal arose in early 2013 and a trip made in October 2013 from Malaysia. Besides Kathmandu, a visit to East Nepal was recommended as the Catholic community is growing rapidly in that area. Conference visitations were made and presentation on the topic "Vincentian Spirituality" as chosen by Bro Joseph Pandian was shared to the local members. The Vincentian virtues of humility, simplicity, meekness, mortification and zeal were highlighted. The sharing was well received and the Nepali members were very responsive and enthusiastically shared about their activities and work with the poor. Visits to poor families (friends-in-need) whom the conferences were serving were also a highlight of the trip. As the Nepali members learned more about the society from our visit, the members from Malaysia also learned more on humility and simplicity in service. It was a spiritual journey for all when we were reminded on the Vincentian Virtues as we fellowshiped and prayed with our twinning partners.

Through the aggregation of other conferences, training of local councils and the National Council is underway. There will be a growing need for training programs for members of Nepal with the help of members of the International Society and sponsorship of Malaysia. It is also planned to start projects in the field of education.

Twinning is essential to the growth of our Society of St Vincent De Paul. It is to embark in the mission by our founder Blessed Frederic Ozanam "to embrace the whole world in a Network of Charity" and Malaysia is glad to be part of this mission.

*Elizabeth LOO*

*Twinning National Coordinator for Malaysia*

# His Holiness Pope Francis addresses to SVP in Syria

At the end of 2013, the National Council of the SSVP in Syria celebrated the 150th anniversary of its founding. On this occasion, the Pope Francis sent a message of congratulations to the members of the Syrian Society. The message is written by Angelo Becciu (Substitute) and was sent to the Society by Mario Zenari (Apostolic Nuncio)



**To : Mr. Riad SARGI**

*The President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Damascus / Syria*

*On the occasion of the 150 anniversary of its establishment, His Holiness Pope Francis offers the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Damascus his warmest congratulations. The objectives and activities of the Society form a tangible expression to what the Mother Church means towards the poor , the children, the youths, the elderly people, the prisoners and the patients, in particular at these difficult moments that the Country passes through. For better achievements of these objectives, the Holy Father encourages the Society's members to live a deep communion among themselves, to keep firm in their faith, and ardent in the charity, nourished with the word of God and in living the sacraments. He entrusts them to the intercession of Saint Vincent de Paul, and to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, the Pope grants them his blessings, and through them to all the People who benefit from their work.*

*Angelo Becciu  
Substitute*

## Hope for a first conference in Suriname

In March 2014, a mission made up of various volunteers of the SSVP travelled to Surinam in order to set up a foundation base for the Society in this country which is the only one in South America that does not have any conferences of Saint Vincent de Paul.

This small nation, which is developing both economically and politically, is made up of various people, languages, cultures and religions. Surinam also suffers from various types of poverty and is therefore fertile ground for Vincentian and Christian mission. It is a big challenge as well as a demanding mission.

The mission took place from 22 to 31 March, and was lead by a team of three volunteers:

- Sebastião Ribeiro da Silva – Brazil
- Arturo Pacheco Antesana – Bolivia
- João Paulo Borsalli - Brazil

The implementation of the initial phase, with an estimated cost of US\$ 15,000, has been financed thanks to the funds obtained through the National Councils of England and the Netherlands.

The volunteers made contact with the religious leaders of Paramadibo, the capital of the country. Their aim was to present the objective of the mission and to obtain a better idea of the local situation of the church. Some priests had already had some contact with the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in other countries and had shown a spontaneous interest for the Project. A meeting with the Bishop of Paramadibo proved very positive regarding the future of the mission. The visits to the parishes allowed relationships to be developed with people interested in forming conferences. Today, parishes organize operations concerning the distribution of food, but these are not followed up by house visits.

Even though the objective of bringing together enough volunteers to form a conference is yet to be achieved, the work carried out and the contacts made have been worth the effort. The foundation of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Surinam will be the fulfilment of the dream of Frederic Ozanam in South America. The presence of SSVP in the country through lay people is a question of time and the will of God.



## New on the website : The Spirituality section...

The International General Council website is growing and is being enriched with new content! In order to respond to the needs of the members of the Society and to ensure that Vincentian charisma spreads to a wider audience, the "spirituality" section is being enhanced. From now on, it will include new articles and will be updated regularly in accordance with current events or the liturgical calendar.

Because spirituality is an essential part in the life of SSVP's members, it has become imperative to put forward a dedicated so as to reflect the importance of this component.

The IT committee, led by Communication Vice-President, Sebastian Gramaio, has, therefore, entrusted the editorial tasks of the spirituality section to our work colleague, Anne Winterberger. Anne is in charge of Training at the International Headquarters in Paris. In close collaboration with Ste McGuire (Spiritual Advisor of the International Confederation), the section is enhanced with key elements including essential subjects such as the Patron Saints of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the opening or closing prayers of the meetings, etc. This will provide many tools that will be of great help to the volunteers.

Articles concerning current affairs are aimed at provoking reflection as well as highlighting the thinking of Ferderic Ozanam regarding the world of today. These articles will be renewed regularly in accordance with events around the globe or the liturgical calendar (Advent, Lent)

Website address: [www.ssvpglobal.org](http://www.ssvpglobal.org)

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## Did you know ? What symbolizes the logotype of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul...

In May 2000, the International General Council launched a contest, in order to provide an official logotype for the Society as well as a true graphic identity..

After the pre-selections, four proposals were selected, and finally the creation of Ceyfo (Centro de Estudio y Formacion Ozanam - España) was picked out by the jury.



What does the logotype symbolize ?

The design is actually a fish. At the time of the Old Testament, the fish becomes the symbol of Christians: YCHTHYS word which in Greek means fish is an acronym for Jesus Christ, son of God, our Savior. The graphic also represents a node, contemporary symbol of solidarity.

The blue color that fills the circle is symbolic because it represents hope, like millions of volunteers who bring hope to those they visit through their Vincentian mission.

The logo was completed by the SVP anagram; for "Society of St. Vincent de Paul," and the motto "Servians in spe"

Throughout the world, the National Councils gradually adopt the official graphic identity by taking on the logo, sometimes as it is, sometimes integrated with a more personalized composition.