



# International Bulletin



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“Witnessing with Hope”

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## “190<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vincentian Marian Youth”

*“In the Church there are associations which are distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations, Christ’s faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public worship or Christian teaching. They also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelization (Code of Canon Law, #298).*

Grounded on the above referenced words from the *Code of Canon Law*, in which the norms of our Church are expressed, our Association turns 190 years old. As we know, our Association has its origins in the July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1830 apparition of the Virgin to Catherine Laboure which took place in a house of the Daughters of Charity. At that time, Catherine was asked to create a Marian Association. With the support of her confessor, Father Aladel, a member of the Congregation of the Mission and the First Director General, our Association came into existence. Between the years 1835-1837, the first groups of the Daughters of Mary were created, and the first member was Benigna Hairón, a young woman from one of the boarding schools that was administered by the

Daughters of Charity.

Years later, in 1847, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Father Jean-Baptiste Étienne, obtained Pontifical Approval of our Association from Pope Pius IX. With the support of the various Superiors General and the Holy See, the Association expanded from France and became established in many parts of the world. In 1850, a branch of the Association was established for young men.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, groups continued their growth and expansion. With the canonization of Catherine Laboure in 1947, the Association was given a strong boost. With the Second Vatican Council, lay apostolates were renewed throughout the Church ... and our Since 1999 we

have been now as the “Vincentian Marian Youth” a worldwide association whose members are united by their love for Mary, the Mother of God. How many more roads must we travel as join hands with our Mother, Mary? Indeed, we are many who continue the journey.



**Yancarlos Carrasco**  
International President of the VMY

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# VMY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

## Africa

The members celebrated the 190th anniversary of the Association. This year, because of COVID-19, the gathering in the national headquarters in Fort Dauphin, took place with a limited number of persons. Those individuals, together with sister Marie-Jeanne (National Advisor), decorated the place and offered prayers dedicated to the members of the Association.



## Madagascar



## Ecuador

On September 18th, the members of the Association began a novena in honor of Saint Vincent de Paul (via Facebook). Each day there was prayer and a reflection on the Vincentian virtues and other various themes, for example, “creativity” and “Vincentians during this time of the pandemic”.



## Peru

During the month of September, the members participated in an activity called JUMAVITON which was intended to raise funds in order to assist those members who had been afflicted with COVID-19. Among the activities was a virtual pastry making workshop ... this activity was concluded on September 6.

## America

## Asia

## Indonesia

On September 20th, a virtual meeting was held with the theme “the footprints of the VMY in Indonesia”. There were some 40 participants (members of the VMY, priests and sisters). During the gathering the group reflected on the various service projects that the members had been involved in since the time of its establishment in that country.



## Lebanon

The members of the VMY in this country did not simply sit down with their arms crossed. After the explosion in the port of Beirut, the members went to work cleaning up the ashes and the broken glass. The members, with the help of the International Vincentian Family, also assisted in projects in various school as well as in the houses of the members of the Congregation of the Mission and the



## Europe

From July 25-31 the members of the VMY were involved in a camp activity on the isle of Syros. There was music, prayer, and some special presentations of themes. All of this knowledge and wisdom that was shared will serve as a foundation for the new catechetical year that is about to begin.

## Greece



## Portugal

From August 28-30, the XXXVI National Meeting of the VMY in Portugal was held online with the theme: Contemplate Jesus and you will live! On the last day of the gathering, the members of the National Council ended their term of office and service and gave way to a new leadership team. Thank you for your love and service on behalf of the Association.



## Formation

# The time to return

We hear it said that the church is antiquated, stagnated, closed off from the world ... and that the time has come to do something about this matter. The Church needs to be renewed in that which is essential and not merely in some superficial manner. We want a young church and an open church. That does not mean, however, that the Church must lose her essence and allow herself to be led by all those things that the world can offer ... to do so would mean the church had failed in her efforts at renewal. Our church is young when she is authentic, when she receives the power of the Spirit through the Word and the Eucharist, when she knows how to return to the sources and does so as often as necessary.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit* tells us that we should not stand apart from others, but rather that we must be human in every sense of the word so that all people might view us as neighbor and friend. Will we dare to be distinct and authentic and to reveal what the world cannot offer? Will we give witness to the beauty of generosity, service and forgiveness? Will we be faithful to our vocation and to prayer, faithful in loving those who are poor and in struggling on behalf of the cause of justice? In other words, will we make the Kingdom of God become more real on earth?

It is important that we listen to the Lord's call so that we do not fall into the temptation of grounding ourselves on the false securities of the world. Young men and women have an important role in rejuvenating the Church because they are not afraid of change or of new beginnings ... they are sensitive to the situation of those who are poor and willing to engage in the struggle for justice. Young men and women can help the church become a church that is poor, a church that gives witness and moves out to the peripheries, a church that gives without expecting some recompense, a church that renews itself in order to journey along new paths.

In order for the church to renew herself it is necessary that all the members be attentive and open to the voices of her younger members. The church must allow those voices to be heard so that there can be an exchange of gifts. In that manner, an environment will be created for the proclamation of the gospel that will touch the hearts of individuals and the word will then produce fruit. As young men and women, Vincentians and members of a Marian Association, we are part of this renewal. May our joy become contagious and may we continue to be light in the midst of overcast skies ... and above all, may we continue to give witness through our hope and love and charity.



**Patricia Roppa**

International Volunteer of the VMY  
Portuguese Speaking Countries

## VMY in Lebanon

## Witness

*Witness of VMY in Lebanon:* On August 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:07 am, the lives of thousands of people in Lebanon was turned upside down. A few seconds was enough time to separate people from their loved ones, to destroy peoples' homes and their sense of security ... to break their hearts as they saw their beloved city of Beirut turn into ashes.

Those initial feelings were quite complex: discouragement, anger, frustration. For many years the people of Lebanon had endured and suffered through an economic crisis that had become more acute as a result of COVID-19. People felt that they could not endure any more pain and felt hopeless. Even people who had lost nothing on a material level, felt as though much had been lost on a moral level.

The Vincentian spirit impelled us to act immediately, with no real plan or initial organization. We began to remove the broken glass from five schools and brought assistance to individuals and families in the various neighborhood throughout the city of Beirut. For a few moments we lost our fear of the coronavirus ... love and zeal helped us overcome our fear.

Our work has been done in different stages:

- We removed ashes and broken glass from the schools and from the houses of the members of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, as well as from various houses throughout Beirut;
- We covered broken windows in order to guarantee people some privacy and security;
- We participated in a project that was organized by the Committee of the International Vincentian Family.

*If you had nothing to put up ..., your charity would not have much practice (CCD:VII:151).*

During these difficult times, our priority was to provide hope to people who had been afflicted with material, physical and/or psychological harm and to give witness to hope in the midst of a situation in which sadness had invaded the hearts of so many people. Most important was the experience that each member of our Association was able to live. Each one of us could see the incarnate Christ in so many sisters and brothers who were suffering. Our service took on a different dimension: we were able to open ourselves to a new mission and we came face to face with suffering.



**Maria Sfeir**

National President of the VMY  
in Lebanon

## International Council and Secretariat

- The Director General of the VMY, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, has confirmed and published the following appointments: **Fr. Pedro Antonio de Silva Guimarães** (National Advisor-Portugal). **Fr. Ondrej Skočík, C.M.** (Advisor - Slovakia); **Sr. Akiteretse Arlaine, DC.** (Advisor - Central Africa (Rwanda-Burundi); **Diego Aníbal Martínez Samudio, CM.** (Advisor - Latin American Coordinating Team)
- On October 13 the International Council held a virtual meeting: the members continued to look for strategies to give hopeful witness. We ask your prayers for the forward movement of the Association throughout the world.

*We received life freely; we paid nothing for it. Consequently, all of us are able to give without expecting anything in return, to do good to others without demanding that they treat us well in return. As Jesus told his disciples: "Without cost you have received, without cost you are to give" (Mt 10:8). No 140*

**Fratelli tutti**

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