



AIC Christmas Newsletter 2020

A Christmas message from our International President, Rose de Lima Ramanankavana



If we had to draw a picture of the year 2020, it would at first glance be rather bleak, given the anguish, misunderstandings, pandemic, disasters and violence that have plagued the whole of humanity over the last few months.

However, a few rays of sunshine have shed some light on this picture: 2020 has also been a year marked by mutual aid, generosity and solidarity! Thanks to Providence and guided by the Lord, we have been urged to act and come to the aid of people who are in need, people who are sick and people who have been victims of natural disasters.

We have now come to the end of the year, and we can already glimpse the spark of Hope that Jesus will bring us on Christmas Eve.

With all my heart, I wish you a very merry Christmas, full of joy and hope, and leading you to a very happy new year in 2021.

"Everyone has a fundamental role to play in a single great creative project: to write a new page of history, a page full of hope, peace and reconciliation."

(Pope Francis - Fratelli Tutti Encyclical - [231])



*Grant us, Jesus, to become, think and act like you.
May the peace and light of the Baby Jesus in the manger enlighten us,
and may we be able to turn to our brothers and sisters in need when we see his loving face.*



Urban garden project in Ecuador and education project in Argentina

An impressive response to the call for projects to address the COVID-19 crisis

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every single country in the world, and especially populations that are already highly vulnerable in normal times. Many AIC volunteers have mobilised themselves to continue looking after the most disadvantaged people. In order to support the work of the volunteers, AIC launched a call for projects to deal with the consequences of COVID-19. It was a real success, as 40 projects from 20 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East were submitted. The main themes were: food and school support, access to computer technology, psychological support and assistance for the elderly, and access to hygiene products. Six projects were selected to receive priority funding in Argentina, Brazil, Burundi, Ecuador, Egypt and Ukraine. Congratulations to them! This call highlighted the capacity of AIC volunteers to act swiftly to help the most vulnerable people. A true success story!

[Find out about all the projects on our website!](#)

An abundance of solidarity towards Lebanon: thank you to all!

AIC-Lebanon sends its warmest thanks to all the people and AIC associations who generously sent donations after the explosion that devastated Beirut on 4th August. The local volunteers are supporting 72 families in an underprivileged area of the city that was affected by the explosion. Thanks to incredible solidarity, mutual aid and collaboration, the social centre and dispensary were able to reopen their doors just one month after the explosion. The association's work has resumed, including an afternoon activity for children. Part of the donations collected have already been sent to AIC-Lebanon, which plans to buy 20 computers to enable disadvantaged children to follow distance-learning courses. The other part of the donations will be sent in December to cover the school fees of children who would otherwise be excluded from school.



The international Vincentian Family has also launched an appeal for donations to help the people supported by the different branches present in Beirut, which work closely together.



“Kéré” emergency: famine in the south of Madagascar

The majority of Madagascar's inhabitants live in difficult conditions all over the island. The extreme south is in a particularly critical situation, not only because of the coronavirus, which has caused many people to lose their jobs, but above all because of the drought, which has been a major problem for years. Food shortages have always threatened this region, but this phenomenon has been considerably aggravated in recent years by climate change. For the past two years, there

has been no rainy season. Crops are scarce and livestock and poultry are starving. As a result, the population is suffering from hunger, especially children. In October, the number of children under five suffering from acute malnutrition was estimated at more than 14,000.

Here too, different branches of the Famvin are working together to assess needs and deliver aid to those who require it most. The 53 tonnes of rice delivered so far are already proving to be insufficient.

[For more information, see our website!](#)

The Philippines hit hard by Goni and Vamco super-typhoons

Two catastrophic typhoons, Goni followed a few days later by Vamco, hit the Philippines hard this November, causing floods and mudslides that killed 98 people and devastated crops and infrastructure. The damage is colossal: more than 250,000 houses were partly or totally destroyed, and more than 350,000 people have been left homeless or in evacuation centres. Some AIC volunteers have lost their roofs or houses.

The Bicol region was particularly affected, and AIC-Philippines is working with the Vincentian Family and local parishes to respond to the most urgent needs. The association is launching an appeal for donations from the AIC network in order to raise the \$20,000 needed to rebuild the homes of 50 families in Naga City and 50 families in Libon, who were already very disadvantaged and whose houses have been seriously damaged.



Let's take action and help the Philippines! This country is hit by about twenty typhoons every year and they are becoming increasingly violent because of climate change. You can send your donations to AIC International:

Account holder: Association Internationale des Charités – AIC aisbl

Account number: 001-6716147-40

IBAN: BE02 0016 7161 4740 - BIC/Swift code: GEBABEBB

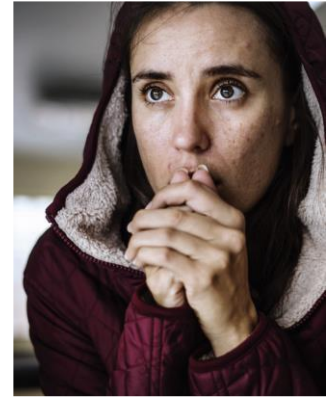
Bank: BNP Paribas Fortis

Bank address: Place de l'Université, 1, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

Payment reference: Donation to the Philippines

A new day centre for homeless women in Paris

In November, a new day centre for women living in on the streets opened in Paris, called 'Accueil Louise et Rosalie'. This project is the result of a close collaboration between AIC-France (la Fédération Française des Equipes Saint Vincent) and the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, in partnership with the Congregation of the Mission. It was established in response to the recent increase in the number of homeless women in the city, a phenomenon that has certainly been exacerbated by the consequences of the current health crisis. These women often live in insecure and socially isolated situations, hence the need to improve the range of services available to them in the centre of Paris.



Initially open five half-days a week, the centre can accommodate up to 20 women at a time. The women receive breakfast and hot drinks, and lunch on Sundays. They are able to use showers and hygiene products, a laundry room and a rest area. They also have access to basic health care, a social worker, medical referrals when necessary, and a Wi-Fi connection. Around 60 volunteers are receiving ongoing training to be able to run the centre on a day-to-day basis and are available to guide and support the women who use it.

Reminder of the meaning of the AIC logo

The official AIC logo was created in 2015, to commemorate AIC's 400th anniversary, which took place in 2017. It has been on all our communications materials since then. It is accompanied by the slogan: **"Building together to bring hope to life"**.

Following various interpretations of the AIC logo, we felt it was important to clarify its meaning:

- ❖ The globe represents *our internationality* and the four continents where AIC is present: Africa, America, Asia and Europe.
- ❖ The pieces of the puzzle that the characters are assembling refer to *our action*: building a fairer world together.
- ❖ The three characters represent *the network of AIC volunteers*, mainly women, without forgetting men, of all origins, who work tirelessly to build this better world.
- ❖ The first date indicates the *creation of our first group of volunteers by St Vincent* and the second, that of *our 400 years of existence*. They therefore explain the meaning of the number 400.
- ❖ The face of our founder appears discreetly in one of the zeros of the figure "400": it reminds us that *our Vincentian charism* is the basis of all our actions.



It is important that we use the same logo in each of our countries as a distinctive sign that identifies us worldwide. It can be used alone or combined with the national logo when the latter is different.

Of course, it takes time to adopt a new logo. We are pleased to see that today an increasing number of national associations are using it, whether it is in their logo or on their uniforms, scarves or any other medium. It's a nice symbol of belonging to our international AIC network!

A very Merry Christmas to everyone!
