

The Vincentian Family in Japan Mourns the Passing of Fr. Mario Colina, C.M.

October 19, 2025 – World Mission Sunday

The entire Vincentian Family in Japan joins in deep sorrow and profound gratitude to God for the life and ministry of Rev. Fr. Mario Colina, C.M., who returned to the Lord on October 19, 2025, the day the universal Church celebrated World Mission Sunday. His passing on that significant day stands as a divine reminder that Fr. Mario lived his priestly life as a missionary to the very end — a priest whose heart was entirely directed toward the works of the mission.

A Missionary Journey in Japan

Fr. Mario Colina arrived in Japan in 1981, sent by the Congregation of the Mission – Philippine Province to serve the growing needs of the Daughters of Charity (DC) and to assist the Vincentian mission in the Archdiocese of Osaka. Following the departure of Fr. Michael Gimarino, C.M., he was appointed interim Provincial Director of the Daughters of Charity in Japan while awaiting the arrival of Fr. Victoriano Torres, C.M., who at that time was completing his Japanese language studies.

During his years in Japan, Fr. Mario's ministry extended beyond his primary role as spiritual director of the Daughters of Charity. In 1993, he transferred his residence from the Kobe House to the Osaka Catholic Seminary in Tamatsukuri, where he was appointed Assistant Director of the Archdiocesan Office for Migrant Concerns. He served also as chaplain for the Osaka International Cooperation Center, an organization that had grown from the early "Sama-sama" community of Filipino migrants whom the Vincentians had first accompanied in Kobe.

Through these ministries, Fr. Mario became a spiritual father to many — Filipinos, Japanese, and other foreign nationals — who found in him a pastor who listened, encouraged, and led with quiet faith. His ability to communicate across cultures, his simplicity of life, and his deep compassion for those who struggled far from their homeland made him a beloved figure not only among Filipino Catholics but also among the diverse migrant communities of Osaka.

A Life Lived for Mission

Those who knew Fr. Mario recall his characteristic gentleness, humility, and steadfast dedication to his calling. He embodied the Vincentian spirit of service: present among the poor, attentive to the needs of the Church, and deeply committed to the pastoral care of migrants and religious communities.

His death on World Mission Sunday is profoundly symbolic. It serves as a reflection of his life's purpose — a life poured out in mission. As St. Vincent de Paul once said, "Our vocation is to go not into one parish or only into one diocese, but throughout the earth." Fr. Mario lived this vocation fully, embracing Japan as his mission field and its people as his own.

A Legacy of Faith and Compassion

For more than three decades, Fr. Mario Colina stood as one of the pillars of the Vincentian Mission in Japan. His pastoral initiatives, dedication to the Daughters of Charity, and presence in the Archdiocese of Osaka remain lasting signs of the missionary heart of the Congregation of the Mission.

As the Vincentian Family in Japan mourns his passing, we also celebrate his life — a priest who gave himself unreservedly to the mission of Christ, and who, even in death, continues to remind us that the life of a missionary is always a life lived *ad gentes* — for God's people and for the Gospel.

May the soul of Fr. Mario Colina, C.M., missionary of Christ and servant of the poor, rest in the peace of the Lord whom he so faithfully served.

“The day of his death — World Mission Sunday — reminds us that Fr. Mario’s entire priestly life was a living mission, a gift of himself to God and to the people of Japan.”