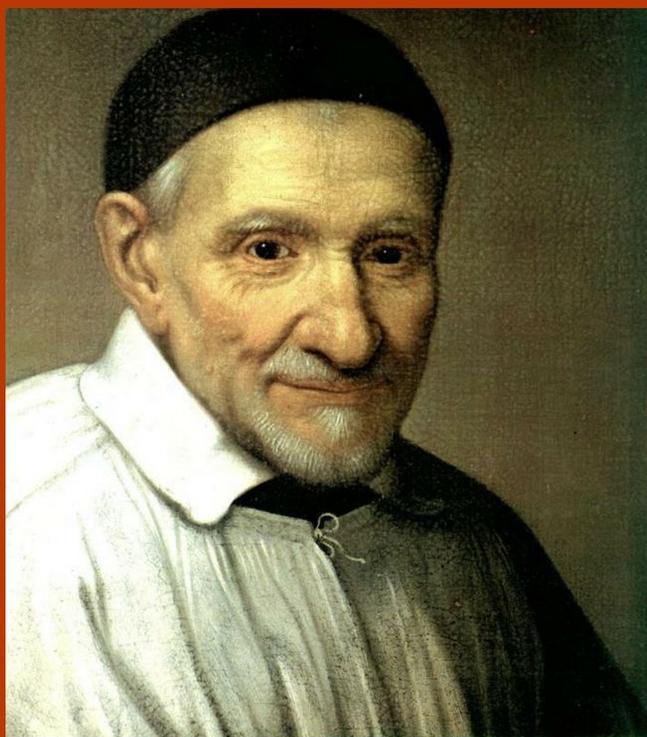


# VINGENTIANA

41th year- N° 6:  
November/December  
1997



**FEATURE:**  
**The Beatifications  
of Frédéric Ozanam**

June 29, 1997  
Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

Dear brothers and sisters, members of the Vincentian Family,

May the grace and peace of God, Our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Last year, on September 27, the members of our Vincentian Family celebrated a day of common prayer. Enthusiastic comments from participants from all over the world attest that it was a very positive experience. With quite unanimous accord, the various branches of our Family asked that this day of common prayer be an annual event.

As you know, St. Vincent was deeply convinced that our practical works of charity must flow from God's love. For that reason, he encouraged the members of all of the groups that he founded to support one another in prayer so that their own experience of God's love might be the source of their love for the poor.

We write today in order to provide some details about organizing this year's annual day of prayer. So that it might be well prepared, we ask you to take the following steps:

1. The heads of the Vincentians, the Daughters of Charity, AIC, and the Vincent de Paul Society in each city or area should meet as soon as possible in order to begin to plan the prayer celebration. After receiving this letter, would you please contact one another by phone or other suitable means as soon as possible. To facilitate this matter, we ask the Vincentian superior in each area to initiate these contacts. If there are no Vincentians in the area, then we ask the superior of the Daughter of Charity to be the initiator.
2. Please invite the other branches of the Vincentian Family in your area to join in this celebration (e.g., the Vincentian Marian Youth Groups, the members of the Miraculous Medal Association, etc.). It is especially important that the young feel at home at our celebrations.
3. We encourage you too to provide for the participation of the poor, who evangelize us by their presence.
4. The prayer could be a common celebration of the Eucharist or some other communal service, according to the circumstances in each area. If a Mass is not possible, one might envision a celebration of the word,

with readings, hymns, prayers, sharing of thoughts, etc. In other contexts, one could envision a "Holy Hour," with the usual liturgical actions (processions, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, readings, etc.).

5. The celebration should be organized on or around September 27, in accord with what date would best promote the participation of the various members of our family. It is important that the celebration be truly *communal*, with the active participation of members of the various branches. A wise distribution of roles will guarantee that all groups take part.
6. The readings suggested for the Mass of St. Vincent should be used, along with, if you judge it helpful, other appropriate selections from his writings. Much will depend on the kind of celebration that is organized in each area. A prayer of the faithful should be organized with intentions contributed by members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family.
7. Last year many groups used this occasion to recall John Gabriel Perboyre, who had been canonized a few months earlier. This year you may wish to give special attention to Frédéric Ozanam, whose beatification we will be celebrating in Paris on August 22.

St. Vincent has given us a wonderful heritage. With him, on September 27, we ask that God continue to enkindle in our hearts the charity of Christ so that it might reach out to the poor, through us, in ever more concrete ways.

---

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

---

Sr. Juana Elizondo, D.C.

---

César Nunes Viana

---

Patricia Palacios de Nava

October 19, 1997  
Mission Sunday

*To Vincentians throughout the world*

My very dear Brothers,

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

Each year, in October, I have written to you about our new international missions, providing some news and seeking volunteers. The response has been very encouraging. Many confreres, of very varying ages, have offered their services. Among these were older confreres, some of whom served long ago in China and still yearn to return to the missions. Others were very young; even students from our apostolic schools have written to me volunteering to follow Christ the Evangelizer of the Poor in distant lands. The age of most volunteers, of course, lies somewhere in between.

I am delighted, however, not only at the response of individuals. Several provinces too, as I mentioned in previous letters, have offered to take on new missions. Most recently, for example, the Province of Madrid in its Assembly expressed interest in starting a new mission even while continuing to supply help generously to other missions. At times, several provinces have combined to meet an urgent missionary need. This was the case recently, for example, when Barcelona, Saragossa, and Colombia joined forces to serve in La Moskitia, Honduras. Some provinces also serve strikingly missionary areas right within their own territory, like Tierradentro in Colombia, Nueva Cajamarca in Peru, and Cametá in Fortaleza, Brazil. Other provinces have longstanding large missions which they continue to staff and support as the region grows toward autonomy, like the Province of Philadelphia's extensive mission in Panama. And speaking of autonomy, the many Irish confreres who labored so generously in Nigeria must surely be rejoicing these days as they witness the creation of a vice-province there. Likewise, confreres in Spain must be very happy as they see the Province of India being divided in two!

This year I visited a very large number of provinces. During these trips people often asked me about our missions. In fact, in Lebanon, last March, I received an invitation to address a large gathering of many of the groups in our Vincentian Family to talk about our new missions. At the end of this letter, you will find news flashes about the most recent developments there. Most of the news, as you will see, is very positive, though in some places the confreres find themselves in life-threatening situations.

I appeal to you in two ways this year, both somewhat different from in the past.

## **FIRST APPEAL**

One of the most frequent "calls" that I receive here in Rome is a cry for help in forming the diocesan clergy. To me it is striking that the Congregation today is experiencing precisely what occurred in St. Vincent's lifetime. His own personal experience drew him to the conviction that the work of the mission and the work of the formation of the clergy were intimately intertwined. In fact, in the Common Rules (CR XI, 12) he describes these two works as "almost equal" and at other times he speaks of them as being "equal" (SV V, 489; VII, 561). So fundamental was the formation of the diocesan clergy in St. Vincent's mind that he made it a part of the purpose of the Congregation when he composed the Common Rules (CR I, 1). Our contemporary Constitutions carefully follow St. Vincent in this regard, while expanding formation work to include the laity: "The purpose of the Congregation is to follow Christ evangelizing the poor. This purpose is achieved when, faithful to St. Vincent, the members individually and collectively:... 3E help the clergy and laity in their formation and lead them to a fuller participation in the evangelization of the poor" (C 1, 3E).

Today, the Congregation continues to sponsor a number of seminary programs where diocesan priests are formed: at Piacenza and Genoa in Italy; at All Hallows in Ireland; at Gdańsk in Poland; at Popayán, Garzón, Ibagué, Inzá, Betel, San Vicente del Caguán, and Restrepo in Colombia; at Cebu in the Philippines; at Chongoene in Mozambique; at Adelaide in Australia; at Curitiba in Brazil; at Malang in Indonesia and in the Solomon Islands. Confreres in various countries also participate in seminary programs that are run by others for training diocesan priests (e.g., in the United States, Fiji, Nigeria, Kenya, Bolivia, Poland, Byelorussia, France and many other countries). Likewise, they serve in universities that offer programs for priestly formation (e.g., at St. John's University in the United States, at Belo Horizonte in Brazil).

In this same context, let me say that I am delighted that there are more than 25 priest-student confreres studying here in Rome this year. A great many of them will surely be involved in formation work, mostly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I know too of many others who are preparing for this ministry in other countries. I want to encourage the Visitors and their councils, as they plan for the future, to continue to prepare confreres for the ministry of formation.

My first appeal, therefore, focuses on the need for formators. Let me give you a number of examples (the concrete realities are surely more eloquent than my words!):

1. The new seminary in the Solomon Islands has now been completed. The Visitor of the Philippines, Serafín Peralta, just went there to represent me at the opening. I will be going next February for a visit, along with Victor Bieler, the Assistant General for the Missions. But we still have a rather pressing need for English-speaking confreres who might be able to teach basic courses in theology.

2. The confreres in El Alto, Bolivia, have candidates and are planning to open a seminary residence, but they need a formator. In August I met with the superior of the mission, Jorge Homero, and with the local bishop, Msgr. Jesús Juárez. They are very happy with the growth of the mission. To work there, a confrere must know Spanish and, eventually, Aymara. He must also be able to sustain high altitudes.
3. The confreres in Tanzania have candidates too, but need someone with experience in formation ministry to accompany them. To work effectively in Tanzania one must know English and Swahili. There is a very good language-inculturation course available, in Morogoro, for entering missionaries.
4. As I write, one of the unanswered letters on my desk is a stirring appeal from the Bishop of Tete in Mozambique (who is one of my most persevering correspondents!). He writes: "Imagine, Fr. General, that a diocese like Tete with an area of 100,715 km<sup>2</sup>, 1,000,200 inhabitants, 25 parishes and missions, and 35 full years of existence has only 5 diocesan priests! In this context, I count very much – not to say exclusively – on the involvement of the Congregation of the Mission to resolve the problem of the Minor Seminary of St. João de Brito (St. John Brito)." As you know, the Province of Mexico has already taken on a minor seminary in the Diocese of Xai-Xai, Mozambique.
5. Several of our own provinces in Africa (e.g., Mozambique) and Latin America (e.g., in Ecuador and in Haiti) have appealed for temporary help (3-5 years) in staffing their formation programs, while they send confreres to be trained in formation work.

That is my first focus of this year's appeal. The number of priestly vocations in some parts of the world is very large. The Church in those places turns to us spontaneously as sons of St. Vincent and says, "Come!" Can we respond to that call? I trust that the answer is affirmative. If you are interested, I ask you to write, even if you have written before. Please follow the instructions on the attached sheet.

Of course, our missions have many other needs. They are so numerous that I cannot possibly mention them all. My heart goes out in a special way to Mozambique, a country that has suffered so long from devastating war with resultant poverty. I think too of Cuba, which I visited this year, where the harvest is very great but the laborers are very few. As you can imagine, I am also eager to continue to bolster the new missions that have already begun. As you read the news at the end of this letter you may find yourself interested in one of these.

## SECOND APPEAL

I know that many of you who are reading this letter cannot possibly volunteer for the missions I have described. The reasons are many. Your present work, also very missionary, may demand your ongoing presence. The condition of your health, or age, may make going off to a distant land unthinkable. Other factors, like background, training, or one's own personal psychological make-up may make the possibility of adjusting to a new culture, a new language, a new lifestyle, and a new way of serving seem very unlikely. Many have written to me over the years explaining their deep interest in our new missions but their recognition, in simplicity and humility, that they could not at this time volunteer. They have consistently assured me of their prayers and moral support. I can tell you honestly that, in difficult moments, I count on the many confreres (plus Daughters of Charity and other members of our Vincentian family!) who promise their prayers.

Today, however, let me suggest to you a very different form of solidarity with our missions: financial help. As you can imagine, our missions cost money! I am proud to say that our missionaries live quite frugally. For that reason, their demands are usually quite modest. But still, they need a home, food, means of transportation. Often they need a center, a school, a church. They themselves need formation and the means to offer formation to others. We encourage all of our missionaries to find ways of raising money locally. We also ask them to submit projects to various charitable fund-raising agencies like Misereor, Adveniat, and Kirche in Not. But even with all that, we ourselves distribute a substantial sum to a very large number of missions each year. This past year that sum reached more than \$800,000.

Here in the General Curia we examine numerous appeals for funds carefully each year and require an accounting of how these funds are used. The monies that we distribute come, for the most part, from three sources: 1) the generosity of provinces that send us money for the poor and for the formation of the clergy; 2) large and small gifts that I receive, which total up to a very significant sum; 3) revenues from some funds that have existed here at the General Curia for a number of years.

As you recall, two years ago I announced the creation of a new fund named "International Mission Fund: 2000." That fund is building up nicely and will, after the year 2000, guarantee our being able to help in an even more significant way in our mission and formation works.

So here is the appeal: Can you contribute to the Fund?

I make the appeal first to the provinces and then to individuals. With this letter, I am attaching a sheet that explains how contributions might be made.

First, the provinces. Several provinces already contribute very generously each year to this fund. They should feel free to ignore the enclosed sheet or, if they judge they can contribute more, to increase their donation. I recognize too that many other

provinces already make large contributions to the foreign missions, without sending the money through the General Curia. That is a completely acceptable procedure. Those provinces too could ignore the enclosed sheet or, if they should wish, could consider making a contribution to the fund here. But I ask *all* provinces, large or small, young or old, of ample means or meager, to *consider* a contribution to IMF: 2000, since this fund will play such a significant role in the third millennium for the development of our missions. This fund will be especially helpful for financing the formation of our candidates, whose number is large precisely in countries where revenues are small. I request, therefore, that each Visitor make the enclosed sheet an agenda item for discussion in the next meeting of his provincial council and that you would come to a decision corresponding to your means and to the needs of the worldwide Congregation. A province might consider, for example, setting aside a fixed amount in its budget as a contribution every year for three or five years. Some provinces might be able to give very little. Even the widow's mite will be significant.

Secondly, individuals. I have always hesitated to ask for money from the individual members of the Congregation. I do so now because others have encouraged me to ask, because I have seen the spontaneous generosity of so many, and because the Congregation's Fundamental Statute on Poverty calls us to use our own personal revenues on "pious works." Our missions and formation works, especially in very poor countries, are surely high among these. Many often think of our missions and our seminarians there and send me contributions each year. Some remember them in their wills. Recently I received a check for \$50,000 from the will of a confrere who had died. A second confrere indicated that he would make a significant contribution upon his death.

So, with some embarrassment, but with as much simplicity as I can summon up, I ask each confrere: Reflect on whether you can make a contribution to the IMF: 2000. If so, the attached sheet will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

Those are my appeals. Forgive me for the length of this letter. My concern for our mission to the poor and the clergy sometimes makes me ramble on!

I thank all of you for your most generous service within the Congregation and ask the Lord to give you his blessings in abundance.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

## SOME NEWS

- ! **China** – Fr. Joseph Loftus is still studying in Beijing. Fr. Richard Preuss is also on the mainland teaching English, as are two Daughters of Charity: Srs. Kathleen Grimley and Frances Bath. Another confrere, Fr. Mathew Thundiyl (India) has joined the China preparation team in Taiwan.
- ! **Rwanda** – The possibility of the Province of Colombia staffing a new mission there is still being studied. We expect a decision on this in November.
- ! **Siberia** – The first two missionaries, Frs. Toma| Mavri□ (Slovenia) and Maciej Kuczak (Poland), arrived on August 9 in Nasnij Tagil. Fr. Krzysztof Waryan (Poland), now taking a course in German, will arrive shortly. The missionaries are settled in an apartment near a small wooden chapel where the Catholics gather. They are now making improvements on the site.
- ! **Albania** – The confreres in Albania, as well as the Daughters, experienced considerable anxiety and suffering during the "revolution" there last spring. The situation still is rather unstable.
- ! **Kharkiv, Ukraine** – The confreres write that the situation there is improving both spiritually and materially. Construction has begun on a pastoral and social center.
- ! **Mozambique** – Fr. Jorge Manríquez from Chile, Fr. Tutarba Iboso from Zaire and Fr. Manuel Henriques Silva and seminarian Carlos César Gonçalves Mendes from Portugal have arrived to offer additional manpower to the confreres there. Fr. Raúl Castro, from Argentina, has just been assigned there. The confreres at the seminary in Xai-Xai continue to be very well.
- ! **Cuba** – Fr. José María Mondéjar from the Province of Madrid has just been assigned there. There are several other volunteers, but approval of visas has been slow. Much preparation is taking place for the visit of Pope John Paul II.
- ! **Tanzania** – We have accepted a new parish in Mbangamao. Fr. James Thiekanath has returned to the Province of India after serving very generously in Tanzania for three years. He has been replaced by Fr. José Manjaly, also from India, who is presently studying Swahili.
- ! **Bolivia** – One of the pioneers of this mission, Fr. Bogusław Sroka, has returned to the Province of Poland after three years of most generous service. He has been replaced by Fr. Krzysztof Wrzeńniak, also from Poland.

## **IMF: 2000**

### **METHODS FOR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION**

#### **Provincial Contributions**

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back. These should be sent to:

Patrick J. Griffin, C.M.  
Econome General  
Via dei Capasso, 30  
00164 Roma  
Italy

2. Direct bank transfers in US dollars to Northern Trust in Chicago:

The Northern Trust Company-Chicago  
ABA No: 071000152  
Credit Account No. 5186061000  
Further credit trust account No. 26-79629  
NAME OF ACCOUNT: Congregation of the

Mission

3. For Italy and France, the CCP account can be used following exactly the information in the Catalogue, page 1.
4. Other possibilities for transfers can be discussed with the Econome General.

#### **Individual Contributions**

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back, sent to the address above.
2. Bank transfers (as above) are possible.
3. Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Econome, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

#### **In every case:**

1. The Econome General will acknowledge all gifts received.

2. If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification.
3. Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.

## **SOME INFORMATION AND CRITERIA FOR THOSE WHO WRITE**

1. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter in time to arrive in Rome by December 15, 1997.

2. So that I might read the letters all at once and so that they might be carefully organized, would you please address the envelopes as follows:

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
MISSIONS  
Congregazione della Missione  
Via dei Capasso, 30  
00164 ROMA  
ITALY

3. It is, of course, helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for the missionaries. Details will vary according to the particular place to which a confrere is sent.

4. While we have decided that no automatic age cut-off would be established, it is surely necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.

5. Confreres who volunteer, by sending a letter to the Superior General, should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will always dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.

6. Your letter should give some background about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests that you have, such as what mission you would like to take part in.

7. Even if you have already written in the past, please contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are available at one moment might not be available at another, and vice-versa.

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

After having meditated over the years on the cast of characters that Matthew and Luke place on the Advent stage, last year we reflected on a rather subtle New Testament account of the coming of Jesus into the world, an early Christian hymn about Jesus' "self-emptying" that Paul used in his letter to the Philippians. The New Testament offers us other, even subtler, accounts of the birth of Jesus. Perhaps the most striking of these stands at the beginning of John's gospel. It too is probably an adaptation of an early hymn. It is very different from the other gospel descriptions of the coming of the Lord. The Christology found in this passage is much more "exalted," so to speak, than that of Matthew and Luke in the infancy narratives. John presents Jesus as the Word of God, existing before the whole created universe and active from the beginning with his Father in bringing the world into being. The hymn summarizes Jesus' pre-existence, his birth, his history, his mission, even his death in remarkably few words:

*In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
He was in the beginning with God.  
All things came to be through him,  
and without him nothing came to be.  
What came to be through him was life,  
and this life was the light of the human race;  
the light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it....  
He was in the world,  
and the world came to be through him,  
but the world did not know him.  
He came to his own,  
but his own did not accept him....  
And the Word became flesh  
and made his dwelling among us,  
and we saw his glory,  
the glory as of the Father's only Begotten,  
full of merciful love and fidelity. (1:1-5, 10-11, 14)*

Let me offer you two brief reflections on this wonderful passage.

1. There is a remarkable tension in John's Christology. On the one hand, it soars off to transcendent heights. Jesus, as the Word, is with the Father before the created world came into existence; he and the Father are one. On the other hand, the Word became *flesh* and made his dwelling place among us. John will not tolerate the slightest doubt about Jesus' full humanity. He consistently combats a tendency that would plague Christianity throughout the centuries: because we believe that Jesus is more than fully human, we will be tempted to think of him as less than fully human. No, says John, when we contact the person of Jesus, we really meet God *in the flesh*. Jesus is one of us.

Notice one thing especially about John's theological perspective. Just as our own lives are a created gift, so also God's enfleshment in Jesus is a gift of gratuitous love. Advent symbolizes God's free, self-giving embrace of humanity – nothing can separate us from him.

St. Vincent loved this mystery of the incarnation. He turned to it again and again as the theological source sustaining our vows and our community virtues. He believed deeply that Jesus was God's ultimate word, his revelation, his offer of himself to us in the flesh. This faith in the enfleshment of God also lies at the heart of Vincent's ministry to the poor. He believed that Jesus in a different, but still intimate, way identified himself with the person of the poor. Knowing the daily, difficult, at times discouraging service we engage in, where appearances may sometimes fool us, Vincent encourages us: "Turn the medal and you will see by the light of faith that the Son of God, whose will it was to be poor, is represented to you by these..." (SV XI, 32). Do we have a fully incarnational faith? Do we see God in Jesus' flesh? Are we convinced of his intimate union with the poor?

Vincent believed at the same time that, to serve the poor well, we too must be "clothed with Christ" (Rom 13:14), thinking his thoughts, loving with his heart, seeing with his eyes. A great Advent challenge is that the Lord might be more fully enfleshed in us.

2. As he wrote, John drew heavily on an important Old Testament theme. He presents Jesus to us as the Wisdom of God. You recall the lovely passage in Proverbs:

*When he established the heavens I was there,  
when he marked out the vault over the face of the deep;  
When he made firm the skies above,  
when he fixed fast the foundations of the earth;  
When he set for the sea its limit,  
so that the waters should not transgress his command;  
Then was I beside him as his craftsman,  
and I was his delight day by day,*

*Playing before him all the while,  
playing on the surface of his earth;  
and I found delight in the children of the human race. (8:27-31)*

I encourage you this Advent to pray that God's wisdom might be born anew in your heart. Wisdom is crucial in life, especially in our own lives as proclaimers of the good news. Have you ever noticed how the Book of Proverbs presents wisdom as a missionary? She is a street preacher crying out a message of reproach and promise in the market place and at the city gates (1:20-33). The first readers of the Johannine hymn were certainly very aware of the stirring words of Proverbs "The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom.... Hold fast to instruction, never let her go; keep her, for she is your life" (4:7, 13).

Jesus is the wisdom of God, "what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched" (1 Jn 1:1). The wisdom he reveals to us is, of course, "foolishness" to some. It involves identifying with the poor, being peacemakers, suffering for justice sake, sharing what we have with those who have less, being faithful to our word, giving perseveringly even to death. Sometimes we too may be tempted to exchange this wisdom, enfleshed in Jesus, for the wisdom of the "world," that today often extols individual liberty at the expense of the freedom of others and allures us with material things which unfortunately sometimes wall us off from deeper values. I urge you, my brothers, to ask the Lord during Advent for evangelical wisdom. The means for obtaining it, St. Vincent was convinced, are twofold: 1) meditation on the humanity of Jesus, God's Word, the Wisdom of God revealed in the flesh and 2) live contact with the sufferings of the poor, the privileged meeting place with God in the world.

I was very encouraged recently when I participated with one million young people at World Youth Day in Paris. As I flew into France, the newspapers predicted that the gathering would be a great disappointment. With the summer heat and vacations, they stated, perhaps only 250,000 would show up. An overflowing million came (including 2,400 from our own Vincentian Marian Youth Groups); another 200,000 or 300,000 had to be turned back. As I looked out on so many young people that day, I sensed their hunger and thirst. They were seeking meaning in life, something that would lead them beyond the everyday routines that ultimately remain unsatisfying. They longed for wisdom. Can we offer it to them? Can we present them with a compelling life-vision? When they approach us do they find people who are truly wise?

As we move closer to the advent of the third millennium and as we prepare in our upcoming General Assembly to meet the challenges of a new era, I pray that the Lord will enrich our Vincentian Family with his wisdom, so that in all creation, and especially in the person of the poor, we may see "his glory... full of merciful love and fidelity."

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

*SIEV*  
*Via dei Capasso, 30*  
*00164 Roma*

**INFORMATION SHEET**  
**on the work and decisions of SIEV**  
**n. 2**

The members of the International Secretariat of Vincentian Studies (SIEV) held their annual meeting in Paris on 4 and 5 August 1997, just after the conclusion of the Vincentian Month on the Popular Mission. It provided the occasion for making a first evaluation, largely positive, of this Month which gathered confreres of the Congregation, Daughters of Charity, a sister and laity, all involved in the service of evangelization through various forms of popular missions.

Then, an evaluation of the work which had been planned at the previous meeting was made (Cf. Information Sheet n\_ 1, of 25 February 1997, published in *Vincentiana*: 1997/2, p. 74). A series of decisions was taken. These were then submitted for the approbation of the Superior General and his Council. The most significant are the following:

1. We will seek to make as soon as possible a first computerized edition, on CD ROM, of all the Vincentian material, especially the writings of the founder, which are/will be computerized and available in different languages, in particular in French, Spanish, English and Italian. The material will be offered on MS DOS and on Mackintosh. The objective is to make a CD ROM at a reduced price so that it would be available to the greatest number possible of persons interested in the study of Vincentian texts.

We would like this first edition to serve as a stimulus so that all the Vincentian writings be computerized as soon as possible in the greatest number of languages. A later edition would be richer and more universal.

2. In view of the second centennial of the birth of St. John Gabriel Perboyre, which will take place in 2002, SIEV wishes to promote a biography of the saint, of a historical-critical character, which would be well documented and situated in the historical context, but also not too voluminous so that it would remain accessible to the public.

3. Another important undertaking is the publication, on the CD ROM of the Vincentian texts, of a Vincentian bibliography listing all the books which have appeared in this field, in all languages.

It is also planned to make an index of articles found in the Vincentian field, principally taken from our magazines.

4. We are proceeding with gathering and selecting the documents of the Holy See concerning the Congregation of the Mission after 1876. As soon as the nature and quality of the material is known, a decision will be made as to the way of placing it at everyone's disposition.

5. We have the same concern with regard to the conferences given at European Sessions and at CIF. We are in the process of gathering the material in order to proceed with an evaluation of the whole so that we can determine how to diffuse what would be of most significant interest in the field of Vincentian studies.

6. We have asked the collaboration of some confreres in composing a thematic list of books useful for the Vincentian formation of our students. As soon as this work is completed, we will send the results to all the Visitors.

7. We have received from several provinces information on the Vincentian studies organizations. This has been very interesting and suggested to us the idea of proceeding with a more complete census of these organizations so that we might know all of them as far as possible. To this end, we are sending them a form to complete in order to obtain the same information from all. The project then foresees publishing the information received in order to create a network of collaboration.

8. A session on Islam has been programmed for 1999. After an initial phase of study, we are now moving on to the direct preparation. To this end, the Superior General has named a preparatory commission. The session will be for confreres who are directly involved with the Islamic world. The purpose of this session is that the participants might share on their situation and the problems which they confront, reflect on their commitment in this milieu and offer propositions for sensitizing the Congregation on this subject. The session will last around ten days.

The next meeting of SIEV is scheduled for September 1998 in Italy.

In the name of all the members of SIEV, I wish to thank anyone wishing to send us suggestions or advice in order to help us improve our work at the service of all.

20 November 1997

Roberto Lovera, C.M.  
Executive Secretary of SIEV

## Appointments and Confirmations by the Superior General

DATE	NAME	OFFICE	PROVINCE
22/07/97	Javier Álvarez	Director D.C. 1/6	Madrid St. Louise
11/08/97	Cor Willems	Director D.C. 1/6	Taiwan
12/08/97	Miguel López Olmedo	Director D.C. 1/6	Madrid St. Vincent
14/08/97	David Sarmiento	Director D.C. 1/6	Bogota
10/09/97	Ferdinando Manzoni	Director D.C. 1/6	Turin
10/09/97	Erminio Antonello	Director D.C. 1/6	Sardinia
03/10/97	Gonzalo Martínez	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Ecuador
08/10/97	Ettore Zoppi	Local Econome	General Curia
11/10/97	John Ranasingh	Visitor 1/6	Northern India
04/11/97	Manuel Ginete	Visitor 1/6	Philippines
04/11/97	Marcelino Cárdenas*	Cook	General Curia
07/11/97	Alain Pérez	Director D.C. 2/3	Santo Domingo
10/11/97	Prosper Deveux	Sub-Director D.C. 1/6	Belgium
17/12/97	Sebastian Thozhuthumpambil	Visitor 1/3	Southern India
22/12/97	Pierre Cornée	Visitor 1/6	Paris
30/12/97	François Hiss	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	North Africa

**Beatification of Frederick Ozanam**  
**Paris**  
**August 22, 1997**

*By P. William Sheldon*

The beatification of Frederick Ozanam on August 22, 1997 was a memorable event for the Vincentian Family. For some the beatification may have seemed like one event among many others marking the World Youth Day; yet the beatification very fittingly took place at this time.

Frederick was in his early twenties when he inspired the foundation of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to deepen the knowledge of the faith among his fellow Catholic students at the Sorbonne. Our Holy Father alluded to this in his homily at the Mass of Beatification, when he spoke of the path of holiness followed by Frederick. *"It is necessary that all these young people, nearly your own age, who have gathered here in Paris from all the countries of Europe and the world, should recognize that this path is also theirs."*

The beatification had its own rhythm. There was careful, detailed preparation for the liturgical celebration on August 22nd, and follow-up. On Thursday, August 21st, the night before the beatification, a Vigil organized by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the Hall de la Pinede du Parc Floral de Paris/Vincennes gave the Vincentians an opportunity to talk, sing, dance, eat, pray and rejoice together. It began about 3:00 p.m. and concluded just before midnight. The president, César Augusto Nunes Viana, gave a keynote address to those assembled, setting the tone for the celebration. Mr. Amin de Tarrazi, who diligently supervised the many details for the actual beatification, spoke of the figure of Ozanam. Folk singers led the audience in delightful song. *Frédéric*, a drama by Daniel Facerias, a play /ballet, presented the life of Frederick in ten scenes – excellent entertainment for an appreciative audience. Readings from scripture and the writings of Frederick served for prayerful reflection. Excerpts from the film, *Monsieur Vincent*, recalled the spirit of St. Vincent, patron of the Society. A video depicted the works of the Society in different parts of the world, showing this spirit alive today. Members from 100 different countries brought grams of flour which was received on stage, then mixed together and baked into bread. The bread was distributed to the participants as they left the hall at the end of the evening – a gesture reminding them of the need to give and share bread with their neighbor. The evening concluded with a blessing by Bishop Terry J. Steib, SVD, bishop of Memphis, Tennessee, and National Episcopal Advisor for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States.

The actual Mass of Beatification was impressive, beautiful and prayerful for all who participated. The setting was magnificent, Notre Dame Cathedral, where St. Vincent

and Blessed Frederick had prayed, where Abbé Lacodaire had delivered the Lenten sermons, for which Frederick paved the way, "*with the goal of permitting young people to receive an updated religious instruction regarding the great questions confronting their faith.*" The Holy Father's moving homily urged the Vincentians: "*Dear disciples of St. Vincent de Paul, I encourage you to join forces so that the poor, as he who inspired you always wished, may be loved and better served, and that Jesus Christ be honored in their person.*" Moving also was his discourse when speaking of the Conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, "*I myself, as a student, before the Second World War, was a member of one of them.*" – a Vincentian speaking to Vincentians! Although only 2500-3000 could be accommodated in the cathedral itself, the 9000 outside on the parvis participated in the ceremonies via television monitors. Priests who distributed communion were able to concelebrate, entering the cathedral for the Eucharistic Prayer and for communion.

On Monday, August 25th, a Mass of Thanksgiving was concelebrated in the Church of Saint Sulpice, another place dear to Frederick and the Society. Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr. Mario Tagliaferri, and many priests concelebrated, along with Vincentian Bishops attending the beatification and the World Youth Day, Msgr. Henny Bomers, Vicente Zico, Tadeusz Goçowski, and Benjamin De Palma.

Before, during and after the beatification, one encountered members of the Vincentian Family at different locations in Paris – at the Maison Mère, the Rue du Bac, the international offices of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Sorbonne, the tomb of Frederick in the Eglise des Carmes and at the tomb of Sr. Rosalie in the cemetery of Montparnasse, in the section Mouffetard, where both Frederick and Sister Rosalie encountered and served the poor. Prominent among them were some 2,500 Young Vincentian Marian Youth, who had special Vincentian sessions at Villebon outside Paris, animated by Father Maloney, Mother Juana, Father Lloret, and many confreres, Daughters and lay people. The youth participated in the sessions of the World Youth Day and those connected with the beatification.

God blessed the events surrounding the beatification of Frederick Ozanam. May they inspire us to increase our knowledge of and devotion to Frederick, help us to make him known, lead to continued prayers for his canonization, and make the Vincentian Family work together to serve Jesus in the poor as did Frederick and Vincent.

# Homily of Pope John Paul II

## For the beatification of Federick Ozanam.

1. "Love is of God" (1 Jn 4:7). Today's Gospel presents us with the figure of the Good Samaritan. In this parable, Christ wants to show his listeners who is the neighbour mentioned in the great commandment of the divine law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself" (Lk 10:27). A doctor of the law was asking what he should do to have eternal life: he found in these words the decisive answer. He knew that love of God and neighbour is the first and greatest of the commandments. Despite this, he asks: "And who is my neighbour?" (Lk 10:29).

The fact that Jesus proposes a Samaritan as an example to answer this question is significant. In effect, the Samaritans were not particularly esteemed by the Jews. Moreover, Christ compares the conduct of this man to that of a priest and a Levite who see the man wounded by brigands, lying half dead on the road, and pass by without giving him any help. On the contrary, the Samaritan, who sees the suffering man, "had compassion" (Lk 10:33). His compassion brings him to perform a whole series of actions. First he bandaged his wounds, then he took the wounded man to an inn to care for him and, before leaving, he gave the inn keeper the necessary money to take care of him (cf. Lk 10:34-35). This example is eloquent. The doctor of the law received a clear answer to his question: Who is my neighbour? The neighbour is every human being without exception. It is not necessary to ask his nationality, or to which social or religious group he belongs. If he is in need he must be helped. This is what is required by the first and greatest divine law, the law of love of God and neighbour.

Faithful to this commandment of the Lord, Frédéric Ozanam believed in love, the love of God for the individual. He felt himself called to love, giving the example of a great lover for God and others. He went to all those who needed to be loved more than others, those to whom the love of God could not be revealed effectively except through the love of another person. There Ozanam discovered his vocation, the path to which Christ called him. He found his road to sanctity. And he followed it with determination.

2. "Love is of God." Love of man has its origin in the law of God: our first reading from the Old Testament shows this. We find here a description of the actions involved in loving our neighbour. It is like a biblical preparation for the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The second reading, taken from the First Letter of St. John, explains the meaning of the words "Love is of God." The Apostle writes to his disciples: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God ; for God is love" (1 Jn

4:7-8). This saying of the Apostle is really at the centre of the New Covenant, the apex towards which all that is written in the Gospels and the apostolic Letters leads us. St John continues: "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins" (ibid., 10). The remission of sins is a sign of the love which the Son of God made man has brought us. Then, love of neighbour, love of every human being, is not only a commandment. It is a demand which is consequent on the living experience of God's love. That is why John can write: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn 4:11).

The teaching of the Letter of John continues as the Apostle writes: "No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit" (1 Jn 4:12-13). Love, then, is the source of knowledge. If, on the one hand, knowledge is a condition of love, on the other, love makes our knowledge grow. If we remain in love, we intimately experience the action of the Holy Spirit who enables us to participate in the redeeming love of the Son whom the Father has sent to save the world. By knowing Christ as the Son of God, we remain in him and, through him, we remain in God. Through the merits of Christ we believe in love, we know the love that God has for us, we know that God is love (cf. 1 Jn 4:16). This knowledge through love is in some way the keystone of the whole spiritual life of the Christian. "He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (ibid.).

3. In the context of the World Youth Day this year in Paris, I am about to beatify Frédéric Ozanam. I cordially greet Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, the city which houses the tomb of the new blessed. I rejoice also in the presence at this event of Cardinals and Bishops from many countries. I affectionately greet the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society who have come from across the world for the beatification of their principal founder, as well as those representing the great spiritual family of St Vincent. The connection with the Vincentians was close from the beginning of the Society, since it was a Daughter of Charity, Sr Rosalie Rendu, who guided the young Frédéric Ozanam and his companions to the poor of the Mouffetard neighbourhood of Paris. Dear disciples of St Vincent de Paul, I encourage you to join forces so that the poor, as he who inspired you always wished, may be loved and better served, and that Jesus Christ be honoured in their person.

4. Frédéric Ozanam loved everyone who was deprived. From his youth, he became aware that it was not enough to speak about charity and the mission of the Church in the world: rather what was needed was an effective commitment of Christians in the service of the poor. He had the same intuition as St Vincent: "Let us love God, my brothers, let us love God, but let it be through the work of our hands, let it be by the sweat of our brow" (*St Vincent de Paul*, XI, 40). In order to show this concretely, at age 20, with a group of friends, he created the Conferences of St Vincent de Paul which aimed at helping the very poor, in a spirit of service and sharing. These Conferences rapidly spread beyond France to all the European countries and to the world. I myself as a student before the Second World War was a member of one of them.

From then on, the love of those in extreme need, of those with no one to care for them, became the centre of Frédéric Ozanam's life and concerns. Speaking of these men and women, he writes: "We must fall at their feet and say to them, like the Apostle: *'Tu es Dominus meus.'* You are our masters and we are your servants; you are for us the sacred images of the God whom we do not see and, not knowing how to love him in another way, we love him through you" (*To Louis Janmot*).

5. He observed the real situation of the poor and sought to be more and more effective in helping them in their human development. He understood that charity must lead to efforts to remedy injustice. Charity and justice go together. He had the clear-sighted courage to seek a front-line social and political commitment in a troubled time in the life of his country, for no society can accept indigence as if it were a simple fatality without damaging its honour. So it is that we can see in him a precursor of the social doctrine of the Church which Pope Leo XIII would develop some years later in the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*.

Faced with all the forms of poverty which overwhelm so many men and women, charity is a prophetic sign of the commitment of the Christian in the following of Christ. I invite the laity, and in particular young people, to show courage and imagination in working to build a more fraternal society, where the less fortunate will be esteemed in all their dignity and will have the means to live in respect. With the humility and limitless confidence in Providence which characterized Frédéric Ozanam, have the boldness to share your material and spiritual possessions with those who are in difficulty!

6. Bl. Frédéric Ozanam, apostle of charity, exemplary spouse and father, grand figure of the Catholic laity of the 19th century, was a university student who played an important role in the intellectual movement of his time. A student, and then an eminent professor at Lyons and later at Paris, at the Sorbonne, he aimed above all at seeking and communicating the truth in serenity and respect for the convictions of those who did not share his own. "Learn to defend your convictions without hating your adversaries," he wrote, "to love those who think differently than yourselves, ... let us complain less about our times and more about ourselves" (*Letters*, 9 April 1851). With the courage of a believer, denouncing all selfishness, he participated actively in the renewal of the presence and action of the Church in the society of his time. His role in starting the Lenten Conferences in this Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Paris is well-known, with the goal of permitting young people to receive an updated religious instruction regarding the great questions confronting their faith. A man of thought and action, Frédéric Ozanam remains for today's university community, professors as well as students, a model of courageous commitment, capable of making heard a free and demanding voice in the search for the truth and the defense of the dignity of every human person. May he also be for them an invitation to holiness!

7. Today the Church confirms the kind of Christian life which Ozanam chose, as well as the path which he undertook. She tells him: Frédéric, your path has truly been

the path of holiness. More than 100 years have passed and this is the opportune moment to rediscover that path. It is necessary that all these young people, nearly your own age, who have gathered together in such numbers here in Paris from all the countries of Europe and the world, should recognize that this path is also theirs. They must understand that, if they want to be authentic Christians, they must take the same road. May they open wider the eyes of the spirit to the needs of so many people today. May they see these needs as challenges. May Christ call them, each one by name, so that each one may say: this is my path! In the choices that they will make, your holiness, Frédéric, will be particularly confirmed. And your joy will be great. You who already see with your eyes the One who is love, be a guide for all these young people on the paths that they will choose, in following your example today!

## **Liturgical texts of Blessed Frederick Ozanam**

*Decrees from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in regard to the date and the liturgical texts for the Memorial of Blessed Frederick Ozanam.*

Prot. 1499/97/L

### **CONGREGATIONIS MISSIONIS**

Instante Reverendo Patre Roberto D'Amico, Congregationis Missionis Postulatore Generali, litteris die 21 mensis maii 1997 datis, vigore facultatum huic Congregationi a Summo Pontifice IOANNE PAULO II libenter concedimus ut celebratio Beati Friderici Ozanam in Calendarium proprium eiusdem Congregationis inseri valeat, die 9 mensis septembris gradu memoriae ad libitum quotannis peragenda.

Contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Congregationis de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, die 23 mensis augusti 1997.

(+ Gerardus M. Agnelo)  
Archiepiscopus a Secretis

\* \* \* \* \*

Prot. 1500/97/L

### **CONGREGATIONIS MISSIONIS**

Instante Reverendo Patre Roberto D'Amico, Congregationis Missionis Postulatore Generali, litteris die 21 mensis maii 1997 datis, vigore facultatum huic Congregationi a Summo Pontifice IOANNE PAULO II tributarum, textum latinum, anglicum, hispanicum, italicum ac gallicum Missae et Liturgiae Horarum in honorem Beati Friderici Ozanam, prout in adiecto exstat exemplari, libenter probamus seu confirmamus.

In textu imprimendo mentio fiat de approbatione seu confirmatione ab Apostolica Sede concessa. Eiusdem insuper textus impressi duo exemplaria ad hanc Congregationem transmittantur.

Contrariis quibuslibet minime obstantibus.

Ex aedibus Congregationis de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, die 4  
mensis augusti 1997.

(+ Gerardus M. Agnelo)  
Archiepiscopus a Secretis

9 September

## Blessed Frederick Ozanam

### Optional Memorial

*Blessed Frederick Ozanam was born in Milan 23 April 1813, but spent almost his entire life in France. He was one of the founders of the Society of St Vincent de Paul for helping the poor, and was deeply involved in its expansion, being one of its vice-presidents. He was a professor in the Sorbonne in Paris, eminent for his learning, and through teaching cultural subjects he upheld and communicated the faith. He was a married man, an excellent father, and he made his family into a small church. He lived in deep union with God and was a model in the practice of Christian virtues. He died in Marseilles after a long illness on 8 September 1853. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 22 August 1997.*

*From the Common of Men Saints: those noted for works of mercy.*

#### THE OFFICE OF READINGS

##### The Second Reading.

From the Letters of Blessed Frederick Ozanam

(Letter to Louis Janmot, 13 November 1836. From *Les lettres de Frederic Ozanam: Lettres de jeunesse*, pp. 243-244)

*We have the poor in front of us*

The saints were out of their minds when it came to love. Their love was limitless, embracing God, humanity, nature. Considering that God became man to live on earth, that a large part of humanity is poor, that nature itself, stupendous as it is, is poor in so far as it is liable to death, the saints also wished to be poor. It is a characteristic of love to wish to be like, as far as possible, what is loved.

And so, my dear friend, are we not going to do anything to become like those saints whom we love? Are we going to be satisfied with complaining about the present-day indifference, when each one of us carries in his heart a seed of holiness which, by our merely wanting it, could bloom? If we do not know how to love God as the saints loved

him, that is something for which we can be blamed. The same is true if our weakness is suggested as a reason for our being excused, since it seems that in order to love we must be able to see, and we see God only through faith, and our faith is so weak! But we see people, the poor, with human sight, we have them in front of us, we can touch their wounds with our hands, and make out the marks of the crown of thorns on their foreheads. So, we cannot not believe. We should throw ourselves at their feet and cry out like the apostle "My Lord and my God! You are our masters and we your servants. You are the sacred image of that God whom we do not see, and being unable to love in any other way, we love him in your persons". If in the Middle Ages a sick society could be healed only through a huge outpouring of love, especially by St Francis of Assisi, and if, later on, new sufferings called for the helping hands of St Philip Neri, St John of God and St Vincent de Paul, surely there is need today for charity, giving, patience, to heal the sufferings of these poor people, poorer than ever because they were refused food for their souls just when they came to lack material food.

The problem which divides people today is not a political problem, it is a social one. It is a matter of knowing which will get the upper hand, the spirit of selfishness or the spirit of sacrifice; whether society will go for ever increasing enjoyment and profit, or for everyone devoting themselves to the general good, and above all to the defence of the weakest. Many people have too much and want still more. Others do not have enough, or do not have anything at all, and they want to take by force what is not being given to them. A war is threatening between these two groups, and looks like being a terrible one. On one side the power of wealth, on the other the force of desperation. We must get in between these two groups, at least to reduce the impact if we cannot stop it. Because we are young, because we are not wealthy, we can more easily fill the role of mediators, which, as Christians, we should consider obligatory. That is the possible usefulness of the Conferences of our Society of St Vincent de Paul.

You have already done well in setting up a Conference in Rome and, led by your wonderful instinct, you have visited the poor sick French people in the hospitals of that city. God will grant you the blessing already given to the original foundation: Increase and multiply. But increase is not enough; as the Society expands the link between each part and the centre must be strengthened.

## **Responsory**

1 Jn 4:16.7

R. We ourselves have known God's love towards ourselves. \* Anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him.

V. Let us love one another since love comes from God.

R. Anyone who lives in love lives in God and God lives in him.

## **Alternative Reading:**

### **From the Spiritual Conferences of St Vincent de Paul, priest.**

(Saint Vincent de Paul: Correspondance, Entretiens, Documents, Paris 1920-25, Vol. XI pp. 32, 77, 392-393).

*The Son of God is reflected for us in the poor*

I should not look at a poor man from the country, or a poor woman, just as they appear to be, nor judge them according to the extent of their intelligence. Very often, in fact, they do not seem to have either the appearance or the intelligence of rational beings, being so crude and earthy. But turn the medal round and with the light of faith you will see that the Son of God, who wished to be poor, is reflected to us by these poor people. During his passion he hardly looked like a man, the gentiles took him to be a fool, and the Jews were scandalised at him. And yet, in spite of all this, he called himself the evangelizer of the poor: *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me* (Lk 4:18). God, what a wonderful thing it is to see the poor when we look at them in God and value them the way Jesus Christ did. But if we look at them with human reactions and worldly evaluation they appear despicable.

The Son of God, in the glorified state which he has from all eternity, cannot have human feelings. He therefore became a man and our High Priest so that he could show us compassion in our wretchedness. If we want to reign with him in heaven we must show compassion to his members on earth, just as he did. Our vocation urges us to serve the most deprived, the most abandoned and those most afflicted with bodily or spiritual misfortune. First of all we should feel deeply, from the heart, what others are suffering. Secondly, what we feel should be reflected on our faces and shown by our way of behaving, as was the case with our Lord. He wept over Jerusalem because of the calamities which threatened the city. Thirdly, we should speak sympathetically, letting the other person see that we share what they feel, what interests them, and their sufferings. Finally, they must be supported and helped, in whatever way is possible, in their needs and sufferings, as we try to relieve both, either totally or partially, because actions should, as far possible, reflect the heart's feelings.

God loves the poor, so obviously he loves those who love them. When one person loves another deeply, such a person also has affection for the other's friends and servants. We should devote ourselves lovingly to the service of the poor, since they are God's beloved. Then we will have reason to hope that God will love us because we love them. So, brothers, let us work with new love at serving the poor, and let us even seek out the poorest and most neglected. In the sight of God let us recognise that they are our lords and masters, and that we are unworthy to render them our little service.

## **Responsory**

1 Jn 4: 19, 21; Rm 5:5

R. We are to love, then, because he loved us first. This is the commandment that he has given us: \* anyone who loves God must also love his brother.

V. The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.

R. Anyone who loves God must also love his brother.

The concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

## **MORNING PRAYER**

### **Scripture reading**

1 Cor 13:4-7

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

### **Short responsory**

R. Blessed are those who care for the weak: \* in the day of misfortune the Lord will deliver them.

Blessed are those who care for the weak: in the day of misfortune the Lord will deliver them.

V. The Lord will make them live happily on earth,  
in the day of misfortune the Lord will deliver them.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Blessed are they who care for the weak; in the day of misfortune the Lord will deliver them.

### **Benedictus ant.**

People will know from this that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.

### **Intercessions**

We trustingly direct our prayer to the God of mercy and love, so that zeal for the evangelization and service of the poor may spread in his Church:

*Grant us your love, Lord.*

God of goodness, help us fill this new day with works of charity for others,  
- so that those whom we meet may receive from us a share of your love.

You have made us sharers in Christ's prophetic mission,  
- help us to proclaim, in what we do and say, the wonders of your love.

Teach us to do good to everyone in your name,  
- so that the light of your Church may always shine out on the human family.

Help us to cooperate in building up a new world,  
- so that Christ's justice and peace may reign over all the earth.

Forgive us, Lord, if we have not recognised you in the poor, in the unhappy, in the marginalised,  
- and if we have slighted your Son in these brothers and sisters of ours.

Send your Spirit to us,  
- so that our charity may be genuine and free of hypocrisy.

Our father

### **Concluding prayer**

You raised up Blessed Frederick, God,  
as someone blazing with the spirit of your love,  
so that he could encourage a group of lay people in helping the poor:  
help us, who see his example,  
to carry out your commandments of love,  
and become like yeast in the mixture of the human race.

(We make our prayer through our Lord...).

### **EVENING PRAYER**

**Scripture reading**

1 p 3:8-9

You should all agree among yourselves and be sympathetic; love the brothers, have compassion and be self-effacing. Never pay back one wrong with another; instead, pay back with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing yourself.

### **Short responsory**

R. You will be my disciples, \* if you love one another.

You will be my disciples, if you love one another

V. Everyone will know this:

if you love one another.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

You will be my disciples if you love one another.

### **Magnificat ant.**

Anything you did to the least of my brothers and sisters you did to me. Come, blessed by my Father, and take possession of the kingdom prepared for you since the beginning of the world.

### **Intercessions**

We have come together to remember Blessed Frederick Ozanam and, mindful of his love for our poorest brothers and sisters, we pray to our Father with hearts filled with joy, saying:

*Make us witnesses and heralds of your salvation.*

Join together in charity those who share the same bread of life,

- so that your mystical body, the Church, may be built up by unity and peace.

Since you love all human beings, bring us, in line with your commandment, to make ourselves available for helping others,

- so that the brightness of salvation may shine more intensely on everyone.

Enlighten governments with your wisdom,

- so that they will enact just and holy laws.

Help those who are discriminated against by reason of nationality, colour, social standing, language or religion,

- and see that they are accorded the recognition due to them.

Protect those consecrated to the service of others,

- and help them carry out their mission in freedom and peace.

Many persons have dedicated themselves to recognise and love your presence in the poor,  
- may they contemplate your unveiled glory in your eternal kingdom.

Our father

## **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

You raised up Blessed Frederick, God,  
as someone blazing with the spirit of your love,  
so that he could encourage a group of lay people in helping the poor.  
Help us, who see his example,  
to carry out your commandments of love,  
and become like yeast in the mixture of the human race.

(We make our prayer through our Lord...).

9 September

## **Blessed Frederick Ozanam**

## **MASS**

From the Common of Holy Men and Women: for those engaged in works of charity.

**Opening prayer:** as above.

## **Liturgy of word**

The readings of the day are used. In individual cases, the following texts may be used.

### **First reading**

1JN 4:7-16.

### **Responsorial psalm**

102:1-2, 3, 13, 17-18a.

R. (v. 8) The Lord is compassion and love.

**Alleluia**

JN 13:34.

**GOSPEL**

LK 10:25-37.

*(The scripture readings used above are from The Jerusalem Bible)*

# The spirituality of societies of apostolic life

*Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Meeting of Members of Societies of Apostolic Life  
Ariccia, Italy  
November 23-25, 1997*

All of us have noted, with some joy, the renewed interest in spirituality today. Some of its manifestations are wonderfully healthy. Others tend toward the bizarre.<sup>1</sup> But one thing is clear. There exists a hunger, "a profound and authentic desire of 20th century humanity for wholeness in the midst of fragmentation, for community in the face of isolation and loneliness, for liberating transcendence, for meaning in life, for values that endure."<sup>2</sup>

Our members too yearn for wholeness, for meaning, for transcendence. The Lord calls us, as leaders in the Church, to try to satisfy their longing. We have many responsibilities as superiors general: decision-making, planning, meetings, personal interviews. But I suggest to you today, my brothers and sisters, that there is nothing more valuable that we can do for our congregations than to hold up before their eyes a captivating vision; an ultimate concern that will enable them to integrate life and give it away as a gift; a deep, vibrant, holistic spirituality.

The topic you have asked me to address, "The Spirituality of Societies of Apostolic Life" is very difficult. It would surely be easier to speak about the spiritualities (in the plural) of Societies of Apostolic Life. But that would be an endless task since our heritages are really quite varied. For example, Bérulle, Vincent de Paul, and John Eudes, though contemporaries and collaborators, handed on to their congregations distinctive ways of approaching God. It could be very interesting to talk about their different emphases: about the vow of slavery to Our Lord and the Blessed Mother that was so important to Bérulle but that ruined his relationship with the wonderful Madame Acarie; about Vincent de Paul's creative love for the poor and his commitment to simplicity, the virtue he called "my gospel;" about John Eudes' deep devotion to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. But those are themes for another day.

That, however, is the path I set out on, for better or for worse. Today I offer you a few reflections on *common* characteristics in a spirituality for Societies of Apostolic Life. But first, let me begin with a word about spirituality.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Meredith B. McGuire, "Mapping Contemporary American Spirituality: A Sociological Perspective" in *Christian Spirituality Bulletin* (Vol. 5, No. 1; Spring 1997) 1-8; cf. also, John A. Coleman, S.J., "Exploding Spiritualities: Their Social Causes, Social Location and Social Divide" in *ibid.* 9-15.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sandra Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," in *Theological Studies* 50 (1989) 696.

## I. A word about spirituality

A spirituality is an energizing vision, a driving force. It is, on the one hand, the specific way in which a person is rooted in God; it is, on the other hand, the specific way in which he or she relates to the created world. It is insight as the source of action. It is a vision that generates energy and channels it in a particular direction, thereby enabling a person to transcend himself or herself. For the Christian, it is a way of seeing Christ and being in him that directs the individual's energies in the service of the Kingdom.

All genuine spirituality, both Christian and non-Christian, has a transcendent thrust. A contemporary theologian describes it as "the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption, but in self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."<sup>3</sup> Almost all theologians agree on the main characteristics of spirituality, included in this definition: progressive, consciously pursued, personal integration, through self-transcendence, within and toward a horizon of ultimate concern. In the Christian context, of course, *the* driving force, *the* horizon of ultimate concern is God's love revealed in the person of Jesus.

## II. Some common traits in a spirituality for societies of apostolic life today

As I begin to treat this topic I ask you to notice four things.

First, I will speak of only *some* common traits in a spirituality for Societies of Apostolic Life today. There are surely many others. I encourage you to formulate those too.

Second, I speak about *a* spirituality. It takes no great humility to recognize that another speaker might have formulated the matter quite differently than I have and that speakers in the future will undoubtedly do so.

Third, I speak about common traits in a spirituality for Societies of Apostolic Life *today*. In other words, I will mention some traits that, in my judgment, are particularly relevant right now, at the dawn of the third millennium.

Fourth, I recognize that my own Vincentian heritage will inevitably color what I have to say. I trust you will understand this. We all speak from our own background. In any event, Vincent de Paul had a huge influence on the development of Societies of Apostolic Life.

---

<sup>3</sup> Sandra Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," in *Theological Studies* 50 (1989) 684; cf. also, 676-697; cf. also, by the same author, "Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?" in *Horizons* 13 (1986) 266; cf. also, Michael Downey, "Christian Spirituality: Changing Currents, Perspectives, Challenges" in *America* (Vol. 172; April 2, 1994) 8-12.

So, in that light, let me describe five common traits.

1. *The holiness of their members, their being grasped by God, is intrinsically bound up with their apostolic mission.*

Let me immediately make some precisions.

First, we share this trait with a number of other groups that are not apostolic societies. Nonetheless, all apostolic societies have this characteristic in common as a key element in their spirituality. It is through the apostolic mission defined by their constitutions, through their contact with the people, that they seek to love and serve the Lord. The 25th chapter of Matthew's gospel is a keystone in their spirituality: "When I was hungry you gave me to eat. When I was thirsty you gave me to drink." When I was ignorant you took me into your school. When I was sick you healed me in your hospital. When I was a prisoner you came to visit me. Of course, as this text suggests, the apostolates of various apostolic societies differ significantly from one another. They focus on preaching, teaching, health-care, seminary education, foreign missions, retreat work, human promotion, advocacy for justice, and probably many other objectives. But it is precisely through seeing and loving Christ in the person of those served that the members of apostolic societies seek genuine union with the Lord.

Secondly, today in an era when the Church proclaims again and again her preferential option for the poor, the poor themselves stand more and more at the center of the mission of most apostolic societies. In this context, their contemporary spirituality involves seeing Christ in the poor and the poor in Christ.

Thirdly, in an era where the rights and dignity of the human person have come to be increasingly emphasized, we are conscious that in giving our lives to the service of the poor, we must take into account their own desires, their own hopes, their own values, and their own real needs. They themselves must become agents of their own human and spiritual promotion. So a contemporary apostolic spirituality demands that we listen more than we speak, that we accompany more than we take charge, that we "reap before we sow."

2. *Their growth in God's life also flows from the bonds of deep charity forged with their own brothers and sisters in community.*

Here too, let me immediately make some precisions.

First, we are all members of apostolic *societies*. Therefore, some form of common life is, by definition, an essential element in our identity. Though community life may take many different forms, an integral part of our basic spirituality is the commitment to build up a community of faith and love *with* those

who have pledged to pursue the same apostolic purpose. But if commitment to community is essential, then this must involve using clear, concrete means to build it and sustain it. Especially important among these are healthy initial formation, well-structured ongoing formation, symbolic acts of initiation and incorporation, clearly defined times when the members pray together, share the Eucharist, eat together, relax in one another's company, and have fun together. Community life aims at forming deep bonds of charity among us. Few things are worse in community than a street angel who is a house devil. A genuine spirituality for Societies of Apostolic Life involves taking concrete steps toward building a supportive community that seeks to draw all toward the holiness of charity.

Secondly, our community life is *for the mission*. This is by no means to say that life together is unimportant. Not only is it important, it is essential. Moreover, one of the strongest lamentations that I hear today from young priests, brothers, and sisters is that they do not find the community support that they had been hoping for. Still, even as I emphasize the importance of community living and the need to create structures for sustaining it, let me add that, in apostolic societies, these structures should always preserve their flexibility. They should not be so flexible that they cave in. But they should be flexible enough to allow us to respond to the urgent needs of those we serve. Vincent de Paul had a lovely phrase that he used to express this concept to the Daughters of Charity. He said that they should be free to "leave God for God." If the poor arrive even during prayer, the Daughter of Charity should feel free to leave the conversation that she is having with the Lord in prayer in order to converse with the Lord in the person of the poor.

Thirdly, today almost all apostolic societies have some form of participative community planning on a local level. A key element in contemporary spirituality for apostolic societies is fidelity to such plans. In the past, fidelity was often measured by observance of a universally legislated rule with an order of day that was much the same throughout the world. Today, fidelity can be measured by a member's observance of the covenant that he or she has made with the other members of the house.

3. *The prayer of apostolic societies, a crucial element in their spirituality, has its own particular dynamic, flowing from and leading to action.*

Our members should be contemplatives in action and apostles in prayer. The founders of almost all apostolic societies were incredibly active men and women. But were there any among them who were not also known by their contemporaries as persons of deep prayer? Vincent de Paul used to talk about contemplation to the Daughters of Charity, who were largely young, uninstructed country girls. It is evident from his conferences that he regarded many of them as already contemplatives.

In apostolic societies prayer and action go hand and hand. Divorced from action, prayer can turn escapist. It can lose itself in fantasy. It can create illusions of holiness. Conversely, service divorced from prayer can become shallow. It can have a "driven" quality to it. It can become an addiction, an intoxicating lure. It can so dominate a person's psychology that his or her sense of worth depends on being busy.

The members of apostolic societies are at their best when they hold prayer and action in tension with one another. The person who loves God "with the sweat of his brow and the strength of his arms" soon knows how to distinguish between beautiful theoretical thoughts about an abstract God and real personal contact with the living Lord who laid down his life for his friends.

4. *Let me suggest that one of the characteristics of the spirituality of Societies of Apostolic Life is liberty.*

I will try to illustrate this in a number of ways.

A first striking sign of liberty in one's spirituality is availability and mobility. Almost all apostolic societies had their origins in a need that cried out and that their founders heard. The societies were the advance troops going in to meet that need. With the obedience characteristic of the times, members went from place to place quickly, willingly, and joyfully. They often set out for far off countries with little hope of ever returning to their native lands. Jesus' call resounded in their ears: "Go! Go into the whole world and preach the good news to every creature" (Mk 16:15). Today as the Church repeatedly calls us to a new evangelization \_ new in its ardor, new in its methods, new in its expression \_ availability and mobility are all the more important. This often means that members of apostolic societies must have the courage to relinquish works which others can carry on, even longstanding ones, in order to be free to meet more pressing needs.

Secondly, many Societies of Apostolic Life are exempt from the jurisdiction of local ordinaries except in those matters expressly provided for in the law. This leaves room for great flexibility and creativity, particularly in regard to life together and government. It seems to me very important that Societies of Apostolic Life rejoice in this liberty and use it creatively in pursuing their apostolic ends and in developing ways of deepening community life and prayer. Particularly in provinces where apostolic societies are in crisis or even appear to be dying, this liberty should move us to act with boldness, to experiment, to try new means for revivifying groups that seem *in extremis*.

Thirdly, in order to be free, members of Societies of Apostolic Life must embrace concrete forms of asceticism as an important element in their spirituality. A contemporary asceticism must be a "functional asceticism" to use Karl Rahner's

phrase.<sup>4</sup> A member of an apostolic society embraces celibacy in order to be "free for the Lord," in order to go wherever in the world the Lord sends him or her in the service of the Kingdom, in order to give himself or herself single-mindedly to a life of union with the Lord in the service of others, especially the poor. Consequently, the members of an apostolic society see material goods in a new way, as an extension of their own persons. They are truly free in their use of these goods because they want to share them with the poor or because they want to enter into solidarity with the poor by sharing their lot. The member of an apostolic society must be willing to renounce anything that holds him or her back from going on mission freely.

Fourthly, Societies of Apostolic Life are part of the charismatic element in the Church. They do not belong to the Church's hierarchical structure. In fact, our congregations enjoy considerable autonomy not only because we are exempt but also because a large number of the canons regulating the life of religious institutes do not apply to us. Much is to be determined freely by our own proper law. The famous words of Vincent de Paul, as he sent out the first Daughters of Charity, ring with liberty:

*They shall keep in mind that they are not in a religious order, since that state is not compatible with the duties of their vocation. They have:*

- *for monastery only the houses of the sick and the place where the Superioress resides,*
- *for cell a rented room,*
- *for chapel the parish church,*
- *for cloister the streets of the city,*
- *for enclosure obedience, going only to the homes of the sick or places necessary for their service,*
- *for grill the fear of God,*
- *for veil holy modesty.*<sup>5</sup>

5. *The spirituality of Societies of Apostolic Life is deeply incarnational, rooted in the fleshed humanity of Jesus.*

This seems so obvious, but there is nothing more important that I can say today. One might surely ask of me: does not all Christian spirituality focus on the person of Jesus? It should. But it is very clear, historically, that apostolic societies have had a special role in calling and re-calling the Church to make the humanity of Jesus, his *enfleshedness*, the center.

Christocentrism was at the center of the spiritual renewal initiated by the founders of the original, revolutionary Societies of Apostolic Life. Bérulle is famous for his abstract, mystical Christology, focusing on the states of the incarnation of

---

<sup>4</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* VIII, 208.

<sup>5</sup> SV X, 661.

Jesus, his adoration of the Father, his self-emptying.<sup>6</sup> Vincent de Paul rallies priests, sisters, brothers, laymen and women to follow Christ the missionary, the servant, the evangelizer of the poor. John Eudes focuses on the heart of Jesus, brimming over with pastoral love. All of them captured the deepest sense of the scriptures. The gospels ring with this conviction: Jesus is the absolute center. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," Jesus says. "No one comes to the Father except through me."<sup>7</sup> "I am the vine."<sup>8</sup> "I am the gate."<sup>9</sup> "I am the shepherd."<sup>10</sup> "I am the light."<sup>11</sup> "I am the true bread come down from heaven. The one who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood will live forever."<sup>12</sup>

As a prayer crystallizing this kind of spirituality, let me recall to you today the wonderful words attributed to St. Patrick:

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

So I say to you first of all, my brothers and sisters: the center of the spirituality of all apostolic societies must be the humanity of Jesus \_ in his personal integrity, in his union with his Father, in his zeal for the mission that he received, in his deep human love especially for the most abandoned, in his passion for the truth, in his ability to bridge the poles of anger and gentleness, in his hunger and thirst for justice.

Our different congregations may focus on various aspects of that humanity \_ Christ the teacher, Christ the preacher, Christ the healer \_ but Jesus himself, fully enfleshed, is always the absolute center.

A final word, my brothers and sisters. I am convinced that nothing is more important for our congregations as we face the future than a profound spirituality. Of

---

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Deville, *L'École Française de Spiritualité* (Paris: Desclee, 1987) esp. 105ff.; *Bérulle and the French School*, edited with an introduction by William M. Thompson (New York: Paulist Press, 1989) esp. 35ff.; cf. also, Michel Dupuy, "Le Christ de Bérulle" in *Vincentiana XXX* (1986, No. 3-4) 240-252; Benito Martínez, "El Cristo de Santa Luisa" in *ibid.*, 280-309; Luigi Mezzadri, "Jésus-Christ, figure du Prêtre-Missionnaire, dans l'oeuvre de Monsieur Vincent" in *ibid.*, 323-356; Giuseppe Toscani, "Il Cristo di S. Vincenzo" in *ibid.*, 357-405.

<sup>7</sup> Jn 14:6.

<sup>8</sup> Jn 15:6.

<sup>9</sup> Jn 10:9.

<sup>10</sup> Jn 10:11.

<sup>11</sup> Jn 8:12.

<sup>12</sup> Jn 6:51.

course, that depends not just on Superiors General, but on all the members of our communities. Still, the task we face as animators is to promote life, principally the life of the Spirit. Our greatest challenge as Superiors General in the Third Millennium will be to breathe out the Lord's Spirit so that it excites our members, enlivens them, and helps them see the world with a compelling vision and live in it with practical love. The great temptation for the members of Societies of Apostolic Life is that they become so caught up in their works that they lose contact with the energizing vision, the driving force that animates those works. Of course our works are extremely important. We must love God "with the sweat of our brows and the strength of our arms."<sup>13</sup> But our works must flow from our "experience of God, of his Spirit, of his freedom, bursting out of the very heart of human existence and *really experienced*."<sup>14</sup> In other words, our spirituality must be fully alive. A deep incarnational love of Christ must *impel* us, as Paul puts it to the Corinthians.<sup>15</sup> If our congregations are really to *live* in the Third Millennium, then a profound spirituality must root us, so that all those whom we serve see that God has entered their lives through our ministry. Do our congregations presence God? When we are laboring in the midst of the poor, do the needy sense that God is touching them? Do they recognize our members as God-people? If the life of the Spirit is fully alive in us, my brothers and sisters, as the Third Millennium dawns, then apostolic societies will surely be a striking sign in the world that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

---

<sup>13</sup> SV XI, 40.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Spirituality of the Church of the Future" in *Theological Investigations* 20, 149.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Cor 5:14.

# The Inculturation of the Consecrated Life in the Madagascar Context

by Benjamin Ramaroson CM

Inculturation is an "in" word, fashionable in ecclesiastical jargon, having a sort of aura and sure of a wide audience. And does everyone think he knows what it is and is engaged in inculturation? Now if there is one area in which prudence is called for it is inculturation. This article is merely a small contribution. The pages which follow do not claim to develop a doctrine of inculturation of the consecrated life, especially since the analysis which is given refers mainly to Madagascar. It will help us, though, to have some idea of the difficulty of inculturation and, at the same time, an idea of its richness.

I will subdivide my presentation this way: A general introduction which will attempt to situate the problem. (Inculturation, urgency, challenge and duty, vocabulary problems connected with inculturation). Secondly, I will touch on one aspect of the consecrated life in order to illustrate our project: community life in relation to the Malagasy categories of *fihavànana* and *fianakàviana* <sup>(1)</sup>.

## A) Introduction

### I. Inculturation: *Urgency, challenge, duty*

How can one remain a Christian, above all a religious, in today's world without alienating and denying oneself, in order to find one's true place, in order to avoid being a counter-witness to others? In short, how can one be fully religious and fully Malagasy? In my own case, at this century's end when many congregations are celebrating the centenary of their arrival in Madagascar and, above all, when there are plenty of vocations everywhere, I cannot avoid being somewhat worried when I think of the future: what will happen to these congregations? The only real problem is that of inculturation: these congregations, although international, will either be Malagasy or they will never be. That is what is at stake in the future of communities in Madagascar, all the more so since more and more of the members are Malagasy. *These members must be helped to have a life totally consecrated to the Lord and totally Malagasy.* If that does not happen then there is the risk that these members will have part of their being and life still on the margin of consecration, giving rise to duplicity in their way of living the gift of themselves to the Lord. It is not surprising to find religious who do this or that and disturb community life (very ambivalent relationship with their family...), but done, obviously, in secret. That

---

(1) We will see the meaning of these words later on.

creates interior problems for the person concerned and for the community.. *Hence the need to show the consecrated life in and through the culture where one is today is one of the great challenges for the future of religious life*, given the diversity of locations. That is why inculturation is an urgent duty<sup>(2)</sup> for all congregations. It is not something optional, it is imperative from our very faith. Without inculturation faith remains superficial, lacking both depth and personal commitment, and even risks becoming counter-witness. The example of the second vow illustrates this, because people interpret it in different ways. Without inculturation there is no real taking root. Paul VI spoke to the African bishops as follows:

*It is up to you to see that the meeting of Christianity with the ancient African tradition is something both living and effective. That is when you will be able to speak of the Church really taking root. It means awakening or deepening a new civilization, equally African and Christian. And we agree with your saying that this is attainable, with God's grace*<sup>(3)</sup>.

The *instrumentum laboris* of the special assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops has the same to say about inculturation:

*Inculturation is not a new method of evangelization, but rather an idea around which all schemes of evangelization take form. Inculturation would appear to be an urgent duty today for the Church in Africa*<sup>(4)</sup>.

Mgr Jean Guy, the late lamented president of the Malagasy Bishops' Conference<sup>(5)</sup>, intervened at the African Bishops' Synod in Rome to clarify certain points about inculturation:

*We are no longer at the stage of staking out our claim. At the moment we are dealing with the concretization of theory... The way is largely open... But discernment is needed, because there is "a new understanding of the faith"*<sup>(6)</sup>.

What, then, does inculturation mean, in particular the inculturation of the consecrated life?

## **II. A question of vocabulary.**

a) *What inculturation is not.*

---

(2) Cf John Paul II: *Redemptoris missio*, ' 52.

(3) Paul VI, *DC* 74 (1997), p. 951.

(4) Special Synod of Bishops for Africa: *Instrumentum laboris*, 67.

(5) Mgr Jean Guy RAKOTONDRAVAHATRA had just died.

(6) Mgr Jean guy RAKOTONDRAVAHATRA in *DC* No. 2094, p. 486.

*Inculturation must not become a sort of folklore show.* For example, inculturation does not mean dressing like the indigenous people or living in huts. But we must understand why this is so. Another example: The Malagasization of the community will not be achieved by making a Malagasy superior, in the belief that he, at least, will understand the Malagasy mind. Something more than that is needed. All these approaches, plus others which I refer to as "folkloric", are merely cosmetic. Along the same lines we can also classify as folkloric the inculturation of certain rites on the occasion of religious profession, because often enough only what is superficial and attractive is kept, with the essential remaining untouched. The rite is merely the epiphenomenon of in-depth inculturation. Even if the rites are intimately linked with the culture, they are not its essential element. A cultural rite is not christianised merely by being transferred to a Christian celebration. The important thing is to seek real values which can be integrated into the faith. In general, rites are only bearers of an inspiration or a mystique. To get away from the folkloric we have to dig deep.

Neither is inculturation adaptation <sup>(7)</sup>, by trying to give the gospel message some local colour, stemming from *fomba* (customs) especially in the liturgy. Adaptation runs the risk of mixing up several things, and even arriving at syncretism.

Finally, inculturation is not a going back to the past, it is not encouraging an "old times" attitude by suggesting the *fomba*. It would be a perversion of its meaning to define inculturation as a blind return to former practices.

This means that we have to realise that the inculturation process is not achieved in a day or two <sup>(8)</sup>. A lot of time is needed since it is not merely a matter of external adaptation but a profound transformation of authentic values by integrating them into the faith and rooting this faith in the culture <sup>(9)</sup>. It is not merely, and solely, a transformation of mentality, but is above all a total incarnation of the faith, and therefore of the consecrated life.

#### *b) What inculturation is.*

Before defining inculturation let us have a look at what culture is, the area in which inculturation takes place. NE 53 of *Gaudium et spes* defines it in this way:

*In the broad sense the word "culture" covers everything by which one refines and develops all one's varied mental and physical capabilities; by which one tries to master*

---

(7) John Paul II: *Redemptoris missio* No. 52.

(8) *Idem*, No. 52: "Inculturation is a gradual process which encompasses the entire missionary life...".

(9) *Idem*: No. 52.

*the universe through knowledge and work; by which one humanises social life, at both family and civic levels, thanks to the development of habits and institutions; by which, finally, one translates, communicates and over a period of time preserves the great spiritual experiences and major aspirations of the humanity so that they may help the progress of a large number, or even the whole, of the human race (' 2).*

In other words, culture is the humanised universe creating, consciously or unconsciously, a group for itself. It is the its understanding of the group from the past and its plan for the future, of its institutions and typical creations, of its habits and beliefs and its characteristic behaviour, its original way of communicating, working... In one word, culture means how the group, and its individual members, behave, think, judge, see themselves and see others.

### **The gospel message**

Having got this far it is just as well to make quite clear at once the radical distinction between the gospel message and any culture. Faith in Christ is not the product of any culture, but owes its origin to a revelation from God (Jn 1:3). Faith can never identify itself exclusively with any single culture. St Paul was already preaching the radical distinction between this truth of faith and all the cultures of his time (1 Cor. 1:22-23). The Church, therefore, does not identify itself with any culture, not even with Western culture with which it has historical links.

However, once we have affirmed this principal of distinction we must not think that between the gospel and the various cultures there is purely and simply a question of separateness and dissociation. If that were the case there would be no further point in speaking of inculturation. Christ himself lived in one particular culture, and down through history the Church was incarnated in specific socio-cultural environments.

*What, then, is inculturation?*

### **The process of inculturation**

Straight off, I have no hesitation in emphasising that it is a very complex process. It is not merely an imitative acceptance of Christianity.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (Jn 1:14). In these words St John announces what today is known as inculturation. God became a human being so that human beings could become his children. By the Incarnation Jesus is *sady Andriamanitra no olombelona, ou tena Andriamanitra no tena olombelona* (Jesus is true God and true man). That is how the traditional catechism defines the Second Person of the Trinity. I find this formula interesting when facing up to defining what an inculturation means. Here, just as in the formula about the Second Person of the Trinity, the order of the two elements of the sentence must not be switched. In the co-ordinate conjunction *sady...no*, it is the first element which enunciates the main datum and initiates a descriptive

movement in which the second element, linked by a natural linkage, comes to add a specification which is supplementary and in a certain sense new <sup>(10)</sup>. This is the process illustrated by the parables of the bread and the dough: the parable of the seed which grows by itself while the sower sleeps (Mk 4: 26-29) and that of the yeast in the dough (Mt 13:33). It is never an absorption. That is why inculturation must not be an adaptation, especially an external one, but a real transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration into Christianity, and the rooting of Christianity in the various cultures. It consists, therefore, in fecundating the cultural values from within the faith. This fecundation will, of course, call for purification so that these values may conform to the demands of the gospel. Jesus did not come to abolish, but to accomplish, to bring to perfection. But it must also be said that in this accomplishment "what must be preserved is what comes from God" (Mk 7). The post-synodal document *Ecclesia in Africa* is interesting. A complete theology of the Incarnation is needed if there is to be a real inculturation. In other words, the Incarnation has to be taken in its three dimensions, historical, paschal and, finally, pneumatic (NE 60-61). These last two dimensions are fairly frequently overlooked. That is why, often enough, the folkloric, adoptionist or "old days" attitudes take over.

In the matter of inculturation, then, the distinction between unity and uniformity must be noted. This brings us to the need for clear discernment: how are we to view the inculturation of the consecrated life?

### **III. Inculturation of the consecrated life**

First of all we must realise that religious life did not arrive in Madagascar in an abstract form, but clothed, not merely in an external garment but in a culture, above all European. This has a lot of influence on the process of inculturation.

Then it is just as well to note that the inculturation of the religious life must stem from the inculturation of the faith. They go hand in hand, and one cannot do without the other without risking being a fragile, artificial entity, without roots. It is hard to see, then, how members of religious communities can work in a local church if this local church as a whole has not been sensitised to the community. Communities, of course, can be engines, but engines are not enough; a whole bodywork is needed as well as the engine to make a vehicle. It is, therefore, not right that a religious community should become a test-bed for inculturation, independent of ecclesiastical authority.

To avoid such deviant behaviour it is well to recall basic criteria put forward by the Council for the renewal of religious life (*PC 2*): The five fidelities, to Christ, to the gospel, to the spirit of the founder/foundress, to the life of the Church, and to the world with its needs and aspirations, and a better adaptation to the needs of time and place. If these criteria are not observed there is the risk of inculturation being neither authentic nor ecclesial.

As can be seen, if inculturation is to be well achieved two identities must be recognised:

---

(10) Cf. C GIRAUDDO: "Prière eucharistique et inculturation" in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 116 (1994), p. 183.

the identity of the consecrated life, and the Malagasy identity: "*sady relijozy no malagasy*" (completely religious and completely Malagasy). This means a religious life based on the identifying, essential, constitutive patrimony, but expressed in the authentic Malagasy culture.

## **B) *Fihavànana - Fianakàviana - community life***

Starting with the two categories *fihavàna* and *fianakàviana* I will try to sketch out what inculturation of community life might be. But why *fihavàna - fianakàviana*? All relationships between members of society, the organization of life in general, are based on *Fihavànana*, on *Fianakàviana*. You cannot, therefore, just take no account of these if you want to reflect on what type of relationships are to be set up in community life.

Given this perspective, it is the anthropological approach, viewed mainly from the social angle rather than the psychological or philosophical, which will be our guide in our search. But at this point it is well to stress that I am undertaking my analysis from an overall perspective, because each tribe and each clan has something special to itself which I cannot deal with in this short study.

Given this, I will deal with the problem in the most concrete possible way, though not based solely on observation. To put the purpose of the analysis in the forefront, to bring out *sady relijozy no Malagasy* (the inculturation of religious life: to be fully consecrated and fully Malagasy) I will try to show that there can be **a certain analogy between the three terms *fihavànana - fianakàviana - community life***. To do this I am going to subdivide my approach like this: **origin-foundation-structure, aspects-purpose, and values-means**. But it must be said at once that all these points are interlinked and complementary. I have chosen this method simply for convenience.

### **Vocabulary - Origin**

Most authors who have studied *fihavànana* and *fianakàviana* realise that these words are difficult to translate into French [This article was written in French]. "So many things are covered by the word *fihavànana* and it is apparent under so many different forms that it is impossible to give one single clear easy to grasp definition" <sup>(11)</sup>. That is why it is better to start from the thought suggested by these words *fihavànana* and *fianakàviana* in order to understand them.

Among Malagasy people it is often thought that *fihanànana* is self-explanatory. Every Malagasy person is "supposed" to understand it and to live without having to have it explained, since his whole existence can be explained only within this "universe". There is nothing in the life of a Malagasy person which is not impregnated with *fihavànana*. It is, therefore, the bond between a Malagasy person and his universe:

*Fihavànana is a reality special to Malagasy humanism: speaking, acting and being Malagasy vibrate from the depth of this reality, the source of various relationships,*

---

(11) Mgr RANDRIAMBOLONA Ph.: "*Fihavànana*, chemin vers la communion" in *Aspects du Christianisme à Madagascar (ACM)* 1990, p. 253.

*especially affection and love, consciousness of knowing how to live, and a self-worth would be, in the closely-knit life of a Malagasy person, the typical expression of his way of being-in-the-world* <sup>(12)</sup>.

It is interesting, then, to see the origin of this profound reality among the Malagasy people. Some proverbs can make it clear <sup>(13)</sup>. "*Ny olombelona ohatra ny ladim-boatavo ka raha fotorana iray ihany*". (People are like the ramifications of the stem of vegetable marrows; looked at close up, in reality, there is only one stem).

---

(12) H. RAHARILALAO: *Eglise et fihavàna à Madagascar*, Ambozontany, 1991, p. 132 (emphasis added). A. RAHAJARIZAFY, in so far as he also emphasises the *fiavànana*: "Every man with whom one lives is a *hàvana* (related by blood and affection), and all relationship with him can be thought of as, and ruled by, only an act of *fiavànana*. A: RAHAJARIZAFY: "Sagesse malgache et théologie chrétienne" in *Personnalité africaine et catholicisme*, Présence africaine, Paris 1962, pp. 104-105. The *fiavànana* is therefore at the basis of all relationships, personal, familial, social.

(13) There is a very large number of proverbs but I have selected only one so as not to overload the text, but it clearly illustrates the idea. Why proverbs? Malagasy culture is oral so it is frequently these proverbs which hand on traditions.

For the Malagasy people, what makes the person is the "relationship" brought about within the *fihavànana*. A Malagasy person is, before all else, essentially a member of a community. He understands himself first of all a member of the society in which he lives without being absorbed by it, thanks to the *fihavànana*. This could be referred to as *corporate personality*. This web of relationships stretches back even to the ancestors, the source of the vital current in so far as they are responsible for its transmission. *Face to face, then, with someone else, in a normal relationship, the Malagasy person believes in a sort of universal sympathy which allows him to see this other person as a father, an elder brother or a younger brother* <sup>(14)</sup>.

As should be obvious by now, *fihavànana* can be applied at different levels of relationship. The nature of the *fihavànana*, its real identity, will depend, then, on the nature and quality of this relationship. According to Mgr Randriambololona's study the relationship called *fihavànana* is made up of three elements: relationship, love, bond <sup>(15)</sup>.

Let us now look at what *fianakàviana* means. It is what might be called *fihavànana ara-pianàhana* (literally *fihavànana* by birth, relationship, bond, based here on blood-relationship). Because of this one might be tempted to think that *fianakàviana* is something akin to the European family. This could lead one astray, because this *fianakàviana* can be very extended. For example, people of the same tribe can be thought of as being of the same *fianakàviana*. The idea, then, is very elastic, while at the same time more restricted than *fihavànana* pure and simple, which is more like the "relationship" within society in the broad sense. There can be various sources of this relationship. That is why, often enough, Malagasy people themselves even when they say they are of *the same fianakàviana* will ask one another: *mifanìnona*, or on what level of the relationship are you? It is the bond which determines the relationship, and therefore at the same time also one's *identity* within the *fianakàviana*, for example someone who has an "assured origin" (*tsara fototra*). From all this stems the importance of genealogy (*tetiàrana*) in knowing one's place in the line, determining at the same time one's rights and obligations.

When we turn to a community, we realise that a religious community is a gift of the Spirit before being a human organization. A religious community owes its origin to the love of God poured into hearts by the Spirit (Rm 5:5), by means of the charism of the founder/foundress, and it is thanks to the Spirit that the community is built up as a real family brought together in the name of the Lord <sup>(16)</sup>. It can therefore be said that the community is of divine origin. It was not born by the will of flesh or blood, nor from personal sympathies or human motives, but of God, of a divine vocation, of an attraction (Cf Jn 1:13). Living in community is a vocation. That explains the important role of faith. It is faith, in fact, which allows members of a religious community to respond to this call, this vocation, and look on the others as brothers or sisters as the case may be:

*A member of a religious community is not merely someone called, through a*

---

(14) Mgr RANDRIAMBOLOLONA Ph.; *idem.*, p. 254.

(15) *Idem.*, p. 257.

(16) Congrégation..., *Idem.*, p. 15.

*personal vocation, but rather someone "convoked", or someone summoned along with others, with whom daily life is shared* <sup>(17)</sup>.

## **The Basis**

If one looks at everyday living the basis of fihavànana would seem to be, primarily, the things which bind the group together. In fact the "giving-giving" (*atero ka alao*) is the determining factor.

On the other hand, for *fianakàviana* the basis is the love which binds the members together. The fullest expression of this love is marriage, which brings family into being (*ray aman-dreny sy ny zanaka = parents and children*), or the *fati-dra* (*blood-relationship*, a rite by which two people bind themselves together and become "blood relatives" to show that they are really joined). *Fianakàviana* goes far beyond the "giving-giving" of *fihavànana*.

As we have emphasised, the consecrated life is located in the area of faith. A member of a religious community is someone who desires to live the baptismal commitment to a profound degree by following the evangelical counsels. That is where the basis of community life is found: the gospel, the radical evangelical life. Christian charity is what vivifies the relationships among the members, the gift of self and the welcome for another to achieve a communion. That is why it is said that first of all a community is a place where people becomes brothers and sisters. Because of this it is never static, like a *fianakàviana* where people are neither brothers nor sisters. It is a becoming. It is, therefore, a vocation to "create". It needs to mature and develop in faith. It calls for journeying. Christ in his paschal mystery is, then, the model for this charity. Just like him, members of a religious community must love their brothers and sisters as he loved us. The charity of members of religious communities is participation in the charity of Christ. And that is where what we called "*mifaninona*" earlier on, in connection with the origin of *fianakàviana*, comes to pass. In fact the source of the bond between members of a community is unique: "*samy zanak'Andriamanitra* (the same Son of God), *samy relijiozy, zanak'i... oh: Zanak'i Md Vincent Depaul*" (religious, son/daughter of the Founder, e.g. "Son" of St Vincent de Paul). This emerges in the daily living out of the special charism of the community because everyone is from "the same root" (*fototra iray ihany, fototra iombonana*).

## **Structure**

While stressing that the basis of the fihavànana is interest we can already conclude that duties and rights are the framework of relationships within the *fihavànana*. This is often referred to as *firahalahiana* (brotherhood). The *hàvana* (group members) must behave like brothers and sisters. The *dina* (charters) are there to indicate these rights and duties, to show how this brotherhood is to be lived in practice, and that those who do not respect these *dina* are excluded, and in fact exclude themselves.

---

(17) Congrégation..., *Idem.*, No. 44.

The *fianakàviana* is based primarily on the bond of blood which creates union coming from *different types of alliances* such as *fanambadiana* (marriage), *fatidra* (see above). All this forms the framework of relationships within the *fianakàviana*. There are the Ray aman-dreny (parents) who are the source, and the zanaka (children) who have the duty to form these alliances. On the other hand, in community life, it is well to distinguish two elements which in actual fact are only one: union and unity among members to form a communion <sup>(18)</sup>.

The first, the more spiritual, forms union. This is the brotherhood or brotherly union which arises from hearts which are animated by charity. This element brings to the fore, above all, union of life and intra-personal relationships. The second element, more external, forms unity, and is the common life or community life which consists in leading a common life based on the rules <sup>(19)</sup>. This calls for a real journeying towards interior freedom, the sole route to real communion.

In religious communities there are certain documents which spell out in more detail how to live the gospel. They also indicate the will of God, but only for those whom the Spirit calls to follow Christ on the way opened up by the founder or foundress. These are the Rules, the Constitutions. There is no question of putting the gospel and the constitutions on the same level. They are there to help a person to live the radical call of the gospel accurately. The rules-constitutions have many functions, not least the organization of community life, brotherly life. This brotherly life, though, is different from the *firahalahiana* (brotherhood) which is found in the *fihavànana*. It is based on evangelical charity. Along with this evangelical charity there is the charism taught by the founder/foundress which each member is trying to live up to. The *vows*, which are merely the sign of a total gift to the Lord, also give a framework for brotherly life in community: "*consecrated together they discover each day that their following of Christ, obedient, poor and chaste, is lived in brotherhood*" <sup>(20)</sup>.

## **Purpose and Values**

The origin, basis and structure have already indicated the aim of the *fiahavàna*: to achieve harmony of life in society. If this harmony is achieved the community is safe and this security guarantees the *aina*, life as happiness for all. This is why "life is sweet": *mamy ni aina*. It is necessary to preserve it from all difficulties and uncertainties, hence the *fihavànana*, good relationships, living together. The main purpose, therefore, of *fihavànana* is the *aina*, life. But following on from the principle that the *fihavànana* is in fact based on an interest which could turn into egocentricity, Malagasy people have no hesitation in saying: *raha maty aho, matesa Rahàvana, raha maty Rahàvana, matesa ny omby ao am-bala* (if I am to die let one of my *havàna* die first, but if one of the *havàna* has to die, may the oxen in the fields die first).

---

(18) This is why community life has been translated into Malagasy by *fiaraha-miaina*, literally union and unity of life.

(19) Cf. Const. 3.

(20) *Idem.*, No. 21.

The values which are found in the *fihavànana* all have direct links with the *Aina*: the *firaïsan-kina* (solidarity) is required from all members to show that all are of the same *aina*. Without this, the *fiainana* <sup>(21)</sup> (the means of using the *aina*) is not possible.

The family structure in general shows that the *fianakàviana* is for the survival of the *Aina iombonana* (life) so that the *anaran-dravy* (the name of the line) may continue. That is why the main value of the *fianakàviana* is the *tsimisara-mianakavy*, the search for communion.

The purpose of religious life is communion with God, that is, to live the life of God, the *aina divin*, that life of unity which the Persons of the Trinity have. Community life is the prophetic sign of this *aina divin* (divine life) which unites all the members. In fact, community life must be the expression of the trinitarian communion and ecclesial communion. This communion will come to its fullness in the eschatology. But even now, in so far as it is a sign, the community is called to live it. That is why we said above that the community is the place where the patient transformation from *I* to *we* takes place every day. This transformation is possible only in the freely-given gift of self. But the community is not a ghetto, closed in on itself. It exists for the mission, for the Kingdom (Mk 3:14. Jesus calls his disciples *to live with him*, therefore to form community life, and then he sends them to *preach the Good News*). Community is inseparable from the apostolate, from the mission.

## Means

We cannot list here all the means which help members to live the *fihavànana* or the *fianakàviana* or the *fiaraha-mianina* (community life). We will select just some points. There cannot be real *fihavànana* without trust, as the proverb says: *ny ahiahy tsy hiavanana* (distrust does not make for real *fihavànana*). That is why "a true friend is worth more than a false *havàna* (member of the same *fiavànana*" (*ny havandratsy tsy mahaleo sakaïza tiana*). This trust calls for fidelity to the *dinà* and *fanèkena* (alliances). Trust then leads to a real respect for the life.

For maintenance of the *fihavànana* it is well to note here the various occasions on which all the *havàna* come together for a true *firahalàhiana* (brotherhood): feasts (*lànona*), funerals (*fandevènana*), rites (*sàotra ou jòro*) <sup>(22)</sup>.

In the *fianakàviana* a family spirit, based on welcome and give-and-take sharing in mutual trust, is necessary to achieve real communion.

Without prayer religious life makes no sense, because it is out of contact with the

---

(21) In fact it is as well to distinguish, in Malagasy, between *aina* and *fiainana*. Both are translated into French as *vie* (life). *Aina* is the breath, with the prefix *fi* it signifies the daily lived life. (Cf. H

M DUBOIS: "L'idée de Dieu chez les anciens malgaches" in *Anthropos* XXIV (1929), pp. 281-331.

XXIX (1939), pp. 751-774, and also H RAHARILALALA, *op. cit.* pp. 183-186). This is why it is well to translate Christ's word as *Izaho no lalana sy fahamarinana ary aina* instead of *fiainana*.

(22) Time and space prevent our dealing more fully with these important aspects of life within *fihavànana*.

source. It is emptied of substance and can no longer achieve its purpose, which is communion, a sign of the trinitarian communion. In this life of communion mutual forgiveness, welcome and fraternal sharing must be at the centre. From that stems the important role of the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation in community life.

### Conclusion

The table below summarises what has been explained above:

<b>THEMES</b>	<i>Fihavànana</i>	<i>Fiankàviana</i>	<i>Community- Fiarahamiaina</i>	
<b>ORIGIN</b>	sociobiological relationships	<i>blood relationship Razana-mifaninona-fototra-tetiàrana (genealogy)</i>	Holy Spirit Faith Founder/dress Vocation	
<b>BASIS</b>	Interests	Love/Affectivity	Gospel-charity	
<b>STRUCTURAL ASPECTS</b>	rights/duties <i>dina</i> (charter) <i>Firahalahiana</i> (brotherhood) <i>Fomba</i> (usages & customs)	<i>fatidra: blood-links</i>	Covenants (marriage- communion)	constitutions fraternal life charism
<b>PURPOSE VALUES</b>	<i>Aina</i> (life) <i>Firaisankina</i> (solidarity)	<i>Aina</i> (life) <i>Tsimisara-mianakavy</i> (communion) Education	Divine life Holiness Prophetic sign Mission	
<b>MEANS</b>	Mutual confidence  Fidelity to the <i>dina-lanona</i> (feast) <i>saotra</i> (sacrifice) <i>fandevenana</i> (funerals)	Family  Fidelity	Prayer spirit  Reconciliation Union with Christ Fidelity to the charism	Eucharist

# Vincentian Bibliography

**ROBERT P. MALONEY, C.M.**

*Seasons in Spirituality*  
*Reflections on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World*

New City Press, New York, 1997 (181 pages)

This third book of the Superior General reproduces a certain number of his conferences and recent articles (published in various magazines). It is an important contribution to present-day reflection on the Vincentian charism and spirituality which can help many members of the Vincentian Family in their spiritual life and their apostolate.

The studies collected in this book touch on many different moments of life and try to throw some light on them from the perspective of the life and writings of Vincent de Paul. They will help the reader to breathe more deeply the spirit of St. Vincent.

Fr. Maloney wrote this book for all those who would like to know St. Vincent de Paul better and to follow him. He dedicates these pages to the millions of members of our Vincentian Family, in rapid growth, whom he has had the occasion to address repeatedly, in different countries.

The Spanish (CEME, Salamanca), Italian (CLV, Rome) and French language editions are presently being prepared.

**JEAN-MARIE ESTRADÉ, C.M.**

*Aïna \_ La Vie*  
*Mission, culture et développement à Madagascar*

Published by Harmattan, Paris, 1996 (303 pages)

The author, a missionary in Madagascar for the past 26 years, is presently director of Aïna, a development center in a disadvantaged suburb of Manakara. He shares his experience with us. As a theologian, philosopher, and ethnologist, Fr. Estrade proposes for us a deep reflection in three parts. **Seed:** the beginning of the mission... and of colonization, a century ago; the arrival of the first sons of St. Vincent and the beginning of the visits to the bush. **Culture:** a reflection on Christianity and colonization, mission and evangelization, traditional and Christian faith, inculturation, faith and development. **Life:** the arrival of the first buds and the first fruits, the ripe fruits of life and hope, belief makes for growth. It is an enlightening and valuable witness about a country where so many of our confreres and sisters work today.

**MARIA LUISA MAZARELLO - BEGHESTI MICAEL**

***Giustino De Jacobis***  
***Inculturarsi per comunicare***

Published by LAS, Rome, 1997 (155 pages)

This study highlights the genius and missionary dynamism of St. Justin de Jacobis whose apostolic action continues to be prophetic both by its inculturated catechetics in the life of the people and by its attention to the local culture, to the traditions and to the psychology of those to whom the message is destined.

The book shows how the extraordinary success of the mission of Justin de Jacobis is due to his sound intuition, to his zeal and his great respect for the Abyssinians, and especially to his strong ecumenical sensitivity.

Seen from this light, the catechetics of J. de Jacobis, is characterized by the inculturation of the Word of God in life and in ecumenical dialogue. Thus, to announce the Gospel is not to escape the socio-cultural and religious realities, but to put oneself inside the life of the local populations in order to live with the Gospel all the realities of life.

**COLLECTION**

***Avivar la caridad***

Familia Vicenciana, Cuaderno n\_ 1

Published by CEME, Apartado 353, Salamanca, Spain, 1997 (119 pages)

With this issue begins the publication of a series of booklets devoted to the lay Vincentian Family. This one takes up the theme of charity and the Vincentian virtues lived by the laity.

The booklets "Avivar la Caridad" do not claim to come out in a regular manner. They hope to offer a service to the Church and to the laity of the Vincentian Family, with the conviction that the Vincentian charism, lived out under different forms, preserves all its value in the Church and world today.

**COLLECTION**

***En tiempos de San Vicente de Paúl... y hoy. I***

Published by CEME, Apartado 353, Salamanca, Spain, 1997 (412 pages)

This book presents 33 themes, translated from the "fiches vincentiennes," published over the years by the Province of Toulouse under the title, "Au temps de St. Vincent de Paul... et aujourd'hui." The themes are presented in their historical Vincentian roots and in the reality of the world and the Church. There are many pertinent quotations which illustrate each theme. A second volume, presenting the other themes, is being prepared.

#### COLLECTION

***Caminando hacia el futuro***  
***Lectura vicenciana de la exhortación***  
***apostolica "La vida consagrada"***

Published by CEME, Apartado 353, Salamanca, Spain, 1997 (310 pages)

This book reproduces the conferences given during the sixth interprovincial meeting of the Provincial Councils of the Daughters of Charity of Spain which was held in Avila from 11-16 November 1996.

In the first part, it offers several talks on the apostolic exhortation, read from the specificity of Societies of Apostolic Life, and more concretely from the Vincentian charism. In the second part, it presents various work experiences in collaboration with the Vincentian laity.

***Quando una vita diventa dono***  
***Suor Anna Cantalupo, Figlia della Carità***

Published by the Daughters of Charity of Catania, Italy, 1997 (132 pages)

Sr. Anna Cantalupo, originally from Naples (1888-1983) served the poor for 60 years in Catania. One is struck by the untiring activity of this sister who, through the most common or the most daring gestures, helped people of all ages and conditions to meet Christ. She gave her all in the works of charity and catechetics. The fire of love made her overcome every obstacle. A strong and courageous woman, she knew how to defend the cause of the poor before the authorities. Every form of poverty and suffering in Catania from the 20's to the 80's found an echo in the heart of her who was called "the genius of Charity."

The pages of this book, which recount significant episodes of her life, are written in a simple, lively style, which reflects well the person represented.

#### COLLECTION

***Light Shining on the Earth***  
***The Message of the Miraculous Medal***  
***The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Canonization***  
***of Saint Catherine Labouré (1947-1997)***

Published by Signe, Strasbourg, France, 1997 (72 pages)

This is a beautiful, large, well-illustrated book presenting the Chapel of the rue du Bac today, the life and witness given by St. Catherine Labouré, Mary's message and two reports on the Associations of the Miraculous Medal in Philadelphia and Perryville, USA.

***Incontro con le prime***  
***Barbara Angiboust, Giovanna Lepintre, Giuliana Loret***

Carità - Quaderno n\_ 3

Published by the Daughters of Charity of Turin, Italy, 1997 (157 pages)

These are booklets devoted to Vincentian spirituality. This number 3, presented by Giovanni Burdese, focuses on charity in general and simplicity in particular. It is divided into two parts. The first (an anthology of texts on simplicity) presents some passages of St. Vincent and St. Louise and some paragraphs from the old Common Rules, but it is not only on simplicity. The texts are presented as quotations from "Perfezione Evangelica."

The second part presents three portraits of the earliest Daughters of Charity: Barbe Angiboust, Jeanne Lepintre, and Julienne Loret. The three studies, of particular pertinence and beauty, are translated from the French.

**COLLECTION**  
**Under the direction of CESARE GUASCO**

***Federico Ozanam***  
***un laico tra carità e cultura***

Published by C.L.V., Vincentian Publications, Rome, 1997 (205 pages)  
Via Pompeo Magno, 21 - 00192 Rome

The publication groups together a series of studies and articles by various authors, judged particularly significant and contemporary.

They are preceded by a brief presentation on the life of Frederick Ozanam and a list of his writings.

This is not the publication of a new study on Ozanam, but rather a "mixture" of texts from various sources, written from a modern point of view, whose purpose is to

direct the reader toward an understanding of this figure under the spiritual and charitable aspects of his life, as well as his social, political, and cultural commitments.

**LOUISE CAMUS-MARZIN**

### ***Frédéric Ozanam***

Published by Téqui, Paris, 1997 (166 pages)

This republication of an original work presents a biography of the principal founder of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, situating him in the political context of his epoch and offering him as a witness of faith and an apostle of charity at the service of the poor.

#### **4 small booklets on Frederick Ozanam**

- **PIERRE PIERRARD ET AMIN A. DE TARRAZI**, *Ozanam un saint laïc pour notre temps*, published by Signe, Strasbourg, France, 1997 (48 pages). Large, very well illustrated publication.

- *Federico Ozanam in mezzo a noi*, published by the Italian National Council of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Rome, 1997 (48 pages). Supplement to n\_ 3/97 of the magazine *La San Vincenzo in Italia*.

- *Relazioni e saggi su Federico Ozanam*, (48 pages), published in n\_ 4/97 of the magazine cited above.

- **AREGLIO COLLINI**, *Federico Ozanam. Il cristiano, l'apologista, il vincenziano* (24 pages), published in n\_ 4/97 of the magazine cited above.

## **General Bibliography**

\_ **ANTONIO MORA J., C.M.**, *Relaciones humanas enseñadas en la Biblia*; published by the Seminario San Vicente de Paúl (apartado 64, 2110 Ipís de Guadalupe, Costa Rica), 1997, (308 pages)

\_ **ANTONIO MORA J., C.M.**, *El Evangelio de los Ricos y otros temas*; published as above, 1997, (78 pages)