

Easter, 1998

To Members of the Vincentian Family

My very dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you !

On January 16 - 17, 1998, sixteen representatives of various branches of the Vincentian Family met in Paris. Among the many items on our agenda, was a discussion of six collaborative projects that are already taking place on the various continents and in which several branches of our Family are working closely together.

In preparation for our meeting we had asked the participants in these projects to describe them, following a list of criteria which we sent them. After examining these projects in detail, we decided to publish them as examples that might stimulate further collaborative initiatives in the many countries where branches of our family exist. Some of the projects are large ; others are small. We do not offer them as ideals to be carbon-copied, but rather as models to stimulate ideas. Each of these projects is already functioning. Each has already received adequate financing from various sources. Each is collaborative, involving three or four branches of our family, often with the prospect of other branches joining too in the future.

Today I offer you the descriptions of these six projects along with this practical question : Can the group you belong to, in collaboration with other branches of the Vincentian Family, organize similar projects in the service of the poor ?

As I write, I recall the challenging words that Pope John Paul II addressed to our family in 1986 :

Search out more than ever, with boldness, humility, and skill, the causes of poverty and encourage short and long term solutions ; adaptable and effective concrete solutions. By doing so, you will work for the credibility of the Gospel and of the Church (Osservatore Romano, English Edition, August 11, 1986, p. 12).

I hope that we can respond cooperatively to that challenge.

Your brother in St. Vincent

Robert P MALONEY, C.M.
Superior General