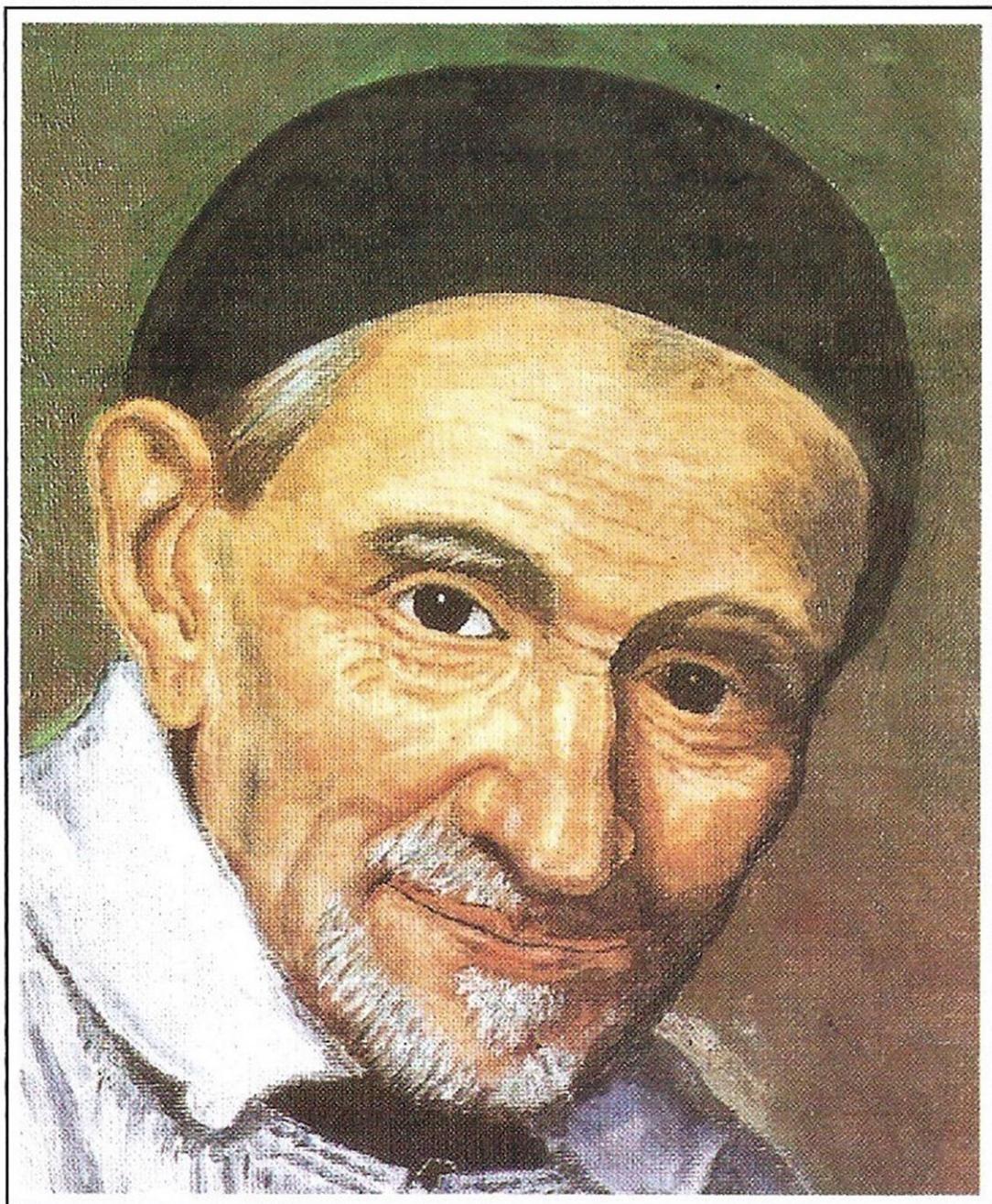


# VINCENTIANA

42nd YEAR, N° 2

MARCH-APRIL 1998



FEATURE:

*Six Common Projects of the Vincentian Family*

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

GENERAL CURIA

March 19, 1998

*To all the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

This week at a *tempo forte* meeting of the General Council, we decided to ask each province to establish two Internet connections, with provision for e-mail:

- 1) at the provincial house,
- 2) at the site of the principal house of formation (e.g., at the theologate or the novitiate).

It would be ideal if this could be done before the General Assembly, since we intend to provide, via Internet, regular bulletins, perhaps even daily ones, about the sessions of the Assembly. Below, I offer you a number of the considerations that led us to ask that all the provincial offices and the principal houses of formation have access to e-mail. We found them convincing.

1. This will facilitate rapid communication between the Visitors and the General Curia, and vice versa. E-mail letters go back and forth almost immediately. When the network is well-established, moreover, it will be possible for us to send *Nuntia* and other documents via e-mail. These items will arrive very quickly and can then be printed and reproduced for the confreres of the province.
2. After the initial installation costs, this method of communication will be considerably cheaper than ordinary mail or fax. E-mail transmissions cost only the price of a local phone call, plus the fee for the provider.
3. As one visits the provinces, one sometimes notes the lack of Vincentian books and periodicals in our houses of formation. When this network is set up, we can begin placing articles in the mailboxes of the houses of formation, via e-mail; these will be in English, French, and Spanish according to the preferred language of the area. The houses of formation themselves can also exchange useful materials with one another. Many confreres who write these days do so

on computer disks. E-mail will enable them to offer their articles to all of the houses of formation easily.

4. A connection to the Internet can also offer many provinces the opportunity to see the Vincentian pages created by other provinces and members of the Vincentian Family. At these sites, much helpful information is available. In addition, the Internet can offer access to news services throughout the world which can provide a global perspective on many current issues.

About half of the provincial offices in the Congregation already are on e-mail. It should not be too difficult for most others to get on-line, since most provinces already have computers. Besides a computer and a telephone line, one needs to have an appropriate program (like Netscape, Microsoft Explorer, Eudora, etc.); such programs are frequently already in your computer. One also needs a modem and a provider. There may be one or two countries where it is still difficult to have access to a telephone and a provider, but even in those places, the problem may be superable.

As soon as you are on-line, would you please contact us at the General Curia, by e-mail, so that we will have your number. If you experience problems in getting online, please let me know.

Pope John Paul II recently encouraged those working with this new technology to "increase the Church's presence on the Internet as a means of proclaiming the Good News in the so-called `Information Age.'"<sup>1</sup>

In that spirit, I would deeply appreciate your cooperation in this matter. I think it will significantly facilitate communications within the Congregation as we strive to serve the poor more effectively.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

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<sup>1</sup> [nota1]Message of the Pope Jean-Paul II to the participants of the 4th Meeting about the Net of Information of the Church in Latin America (RIAL - Red de Informática de la Iglesia en América Latina) given in the Dominican Republic from 3 to 6 March, 1998.

**CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION  
PCGA 1998**

**DOCUMENTUM LABORIS  
39th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**The Worldwide Vincentian Family and the  
Challenges of the Mission in the Third Millennium**

The "*Documentum Laboris*" of the 1992 General Assembly encouraged the Congregation of the Mission to examine the contradictions of our world and to blaze new paths to respond to the world's dilemmas. It invited us *to open our eyes* to the realities which the poor confront; *to open our hearts* to love the poor as God loves them; *to open our arms* to evangelize and serve the poor as St. Vincent taught us to do; *to open our way of thinking* so that we can collaborate with others in the knowledge, love and service we give to God by our knowledge, love and service to the poor.

The 1992 General Assembly<sup>1</sup> was known as a pastoral assembly. The delegates shared their apostolic experiences to animate the Assembly itself and to encourage the Congregation to assume apostolic commitments in view of the needs of our time.<sup>2</sup> It did not intend to draft a very comprehensive document, rather a simple personal letter from brothers to confreres.<sup>3</sup>

Our 1998 General Assembly, at the turning point between the second and third millennium, *will also be a pastoral assembly*. Taking into account the recommendations of the provinces in their responses to the Consultative Document, the Preparatory Commission suggests that the 1998 General Assembly begin where the 1992 General Assembly left off.

We now know the theme of the 1998 Assembly as a result of the preparations realized in the Domestic and Provincial Assemblies: *The Worldwide Vincentian Family and the Challenges for the Mission in the Third Millennium*. We are invited to *open the horizons of the Congregation of the Mission* toward the new day that is dawning, conscious that in the world many Christians, and the number is growing, strive to follow

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<sup>1</sup> The 1992 General Assembly adopted as a theme the words of St. Paul "*transform yourself by the renewal of your mind*" (Rom 12:2).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Vincentiana* (1992) 271-391; 392-531; 556-585.

<sup>3</sup> The dynamic of the Assembly centered on the interchange of experiences of the apostolic work of the delegates themselves or of their provinces. The final letter of the 1992 Assembly to the confreres recognized: "*To tell the truth, we were able to make experience the 'key' of the Assembly.*"

Jesus Christ along that road taken by Vincent de Paul and his disciples, such as Louise de Marillac and Frederick Ozanam.

In order to develop the theme of the General Assembly, the PCGA '98 thinks that the Consultative Document, which inspired the celebration of the Domestic and Provincial Assemblies, continues to maintain its usefulness as a point of reference.<sup>4</sup> Thus, gathering up the sense of the responses of the provinces, the PCGA '98 now proposes as the DOCUMENTUM LABORIS, a blending of *convictions and commitments* that can help the General Assembly to make some decisions.

## I. First Part: Convictions

### 1. *As we approach the new Millennium, we feel the responsibility toward the Mission to be even stronger.*

As Church and in the Church,<sup>5</sup> we, the members of the Congregation of the Mission are *on our way to the third millennium*.

The Pope has presented to us the decisive objective of the Jubilee and the common basic theme of the coming years: *"Everything ought to focus on the primary objective of the jubilee: the strengthening of faith and of the witness of Christians. It is therefore necessary to inspire in all the faithful a true longing for holiness, a deep desire for conversion and personal renewal in a context of ever more intense prayer and of solidarity with one's neighbors, especially the most needy."*<sup>6</sup>

The Domestic and Provincial Assemblies have gathered the *challenges* that we must live with at this moment in history.

*We are well aware of the many problems of today's world.* We barely scratch the surface of some problems, when other new ones strike our heart:

- The world of poverty is constantly growing wider and the number of the poor continues to grow.
- Poverty threatens every day in new ways and presents itself with new faces.

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<sup>4</sup> The PCGA '98 did not want to go back and repeat here the Consultative Document that, according to the province reports, helped the reflection so much. In this present *Documentum Laboris*, the PCGA '98 has remained faithful to the proposals of the Provincial Assemblies in their responses to the questionnaire that accompanied the Consultative Document.

This *Documentum Laboris* ought to be read in conjunction with the other instruments prepared by the PCGA '98: synthesis of the responses of the provinces to the Consultative Document; postulata and recommendations for their discussion; suggestions for the dynamic of the General Assembly; proposals for the Directory.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Constitution 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 42; cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21.

- Due to the violent changes arising from neo-liberalism, shifting ideologies, and a certain type of death culture,<sup>7</sup> even more complicated problems confront us. We find it difficult to discover the appropriate solutions. We are urged to an increased creativity.

### **We discover that our world:**

- *Finds itself in need of God*, due to secularism, due to the loss of human values and Christian principles, due to indifference, due to attacks of fundamentalism. The moral and spiritual heritage of many of our people "runs the risk of being dispersed under the impact of a multiplicity of processes, including secularization and the spread of sects."<sup>8</sup>

- *Finds itself in need of love*, solidarity, the generous response of men and women willing and able to volunteer,<sup>9</sup> not for war, hatred, and violence, but rather for peace, justice and love; persons who work for and concern themselves with accepting, assisting, directing, helping, sustaining and raising up all those citizens and brothers and sisters that society has impoverished and abused.

- *Finds itself in need of our witness and dedication*: "The world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible. The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our word will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man."<sup>10</sup>

*We are convinced* that at this historical moment, the Church calls us to *intensify our missionary commitment*. Given that *love is creative unto infinity*, we must pursue and tune our responses in favor of the poor. "The whole Church, Pastors and lay faithful alike, standing on the threshold of the Third Millennium, ought to feel more strongly the Church's responsibility to obey the command of Christ, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation' (Mk 16:15), and take up anew the missionary endeavour. A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church \_ that of a *re-evangelization*, which is so much needed by the present world."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 34.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Centesimus Annus*, 49.

<sup>10</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 76.

<sup>11</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, 64.

2. ***We, the members of the Congregation of the Mission know that in all the world, the Vincentian Family strives to live out faithfully their following of Jesus Christ, the Evangelizer of the Poor.***

During the celebration of our Domestic and Provincial Assemblies, we lived through the experience of a *joyful discovery*. We discovered that together with us, the members of the Congregation of the Mission, there are many other persons and groups in the Church that are on fire with the same spirit and the same zeal that animates us. There are a great number of persons inspired by the charism of St. Vincent de Paul who labor in the evangelization of the poor.

A recent study identified 268 groups that can find their place on our *family tree*.<sup>12</sup> Many other persons are involved in the works of evangelization and service to the poor with the members of the Vincentian Family, even though they do not pertain juridically to any of the groups: professors in our seminaries or education centers, alumni, collaborators, benefactors, ex-confreres, lay missionaries, catechists.

In a like manner, the members of these groups *challenge us to respond jointly to the cry of the poor*.

During the 1998 General Assembly, *we will celebrate the gathering of the Congregation of the Mission with other groups of our Vincentian Family*.

- We will give thanks to God for the gift of the Spirit that fills the Vincentian charism and is spread in the world through many outward expressions.

- We will share, with the members of the various Vincentian groups, the challenge to promote, among ourselves, new attitudes that will make our collaboration, our familiarity, and our coordination more effective: at the local level, at the provincial and interprovincial level, at the continental level and at the world level.

- We will accept some realistic commitments with a projection toward the future in order to respond together to the challenges of the mission as we look toward the third millennium.

## **II. Second Part: Commitments**

The responses of the provinces have insisted that the General Assembly formulate some concrete and effective commitments.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Betty Ann McNeil, *Monograph 1: The Vincentian Family Tree*, Vincentian Studies Institute, 1996. 61.5 % of these groups still exist (165). These groups were either founded by St. Vincent de Paul, or adopt the rules of St. Vincent de Paul or simply find their inspiration in him, or possess a spirituality based on St. Vincent de Paul.

*To respond to our vocation and mission, the members of the Congregation of the Mission, at the threshold of the third millennium, commit ourselves:*

**1. *To promote the coordination of the Vincentian Family.***

Together with the members of the Vincentian Family, we can become a most effective force for the service of evangelization and for the works of charity in the Church.

*Coordination* is a stable way of working that assumes a common thrust. It is familiarity, it is fondness, it is motion in the same direction. It implies a thrust forward. It creates a style, a habit. It requires humility, because it means others are also necessary.<sup>13</sup>

*1.1. In the next two years and for the new millennium, we will make every effort to acquire in each one of us and in each one of our communities, a change of heart and attitude that will enable us to feel with a new heart and to see with a new vision each person and each group of the Vincentian Family.*

*1.2. In each one of those places where the Congregation of the Mission is established, the local superiors will take the first steps to establish levels of coordination with the Vincentian Family of that place. The Visitors, the Conferences of Visitors, and the Superior General will also move forward in this same way.*

*1.3. In each one of those places where the Congregation of the Mission is established, the local superiors will promote common prayer, preferably liturgical prayer, with the members of the Vincentian Family of that place: it should be a vibrant prayer, faithful to the Vincentian tradition, creative and beautiful for God and for the youth.*

*1.4. Knowing that coordination is not always easy to achieve, we will be open and disposed to facilitate it, at the local level, at the provincial and general levels; and we will never say "no" nor will we give up on the attempts to come together and to coordinate (however great the difficulties and problems may be).*

*1.5. A register should be opened in the General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission that will contain the inscribed groups that pertain to the Vincentian Family: a) the institutes founded by St. Vincent de Paul; b) the institutes inspired by St. Vincent de Paul and approved by the legitimate ecclesiastical authorities, or by the Superior General or by the Visitors within the context of their own*

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<sup>13</sup> This is the concrete expression and confirmation of a communal ecclesiology. Cf. Synod of Bishops, 1985.

provinces. *This register is to be updated each year and shared with all the provinces.*

1.6. *Statute 7 will be modified in such a way that it includes the term Vincentian Family, and that it express clearly our commitment of coordination, mutual collaboration, and service to formation.*

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission will be able to fulfill each one of these obligations?**

2. *To respond in a meaningful way to the calls of the poor.*

The perspective of the Third Millennium invites us to face, with renewed missionary effort, the vast "territories" where Christ is still not sufficiently present as Redeemer and Fullness.<sup>14</sup>

The Vincentian Family Tree sinks its roots in the discovery that the poor are *our lords and masters*, they represent Our Lord himself to us, and it assures us that we should consider done to the Lord that which we do to the least of our brothers and sisters.<sup>15</sup> How will we be able to celebrate the bi-millennium of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the missionary of the Father and the Evangelizer of the Poor? The poor will not be able to make pilgrimages to Rome nor to the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> The missionaries can journey with the poor toward a new millennium of solidarity and service to the temple that is the human person;<sup>17</sup> we can make ourselves one with them, and share our lives with them because they are the *special members* of our family.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Jubilee will be Good News and a new hope for the poor.

2.1. *In the upcoming years, each one of us missionaries and our local communities desire to strengthen the dimension of charity in our own lives and in our ministries.*

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<sup>14</sup> Col 1:19. The responses of the provinces have presented numerous experiences of new poverties, of the new "areopagi," of the efforts at new evangelization. Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 37. The recent teachings of John Paul II on these themes are abundant. Cf. *Vincentiana* (1996) 221.

<sup>15</sup> "To serve the poor is to serve Jesus Christ" (SV IX, 252). Cf. also SV XIII, 808-810; XI, 32. For this reason, it is necessary to serve the poor just as Our Lord served them (SV IX, 594) and therefore, we must put on the same spirit (SV XII, 107).

<sup>16</sup> Jubilees have been celebrated with pilgrimages to the *holy places* (cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 55). Referring to the Grand Jubilee of 2000, John Paul II has noted that it "will be, in a certain sense, like any other. But at the same time it will be different, greater than any other" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 16).

<sup>17</sup> "In Jesus Christ God not only speaks to man but also seeks him out. The incarnation of the Son of God attests that God goes in search of man" (Cf. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 7).

<sup>18</sup> "Cooperating in missionary activity means not just giving but also receiving" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 85).

2.2. *Each one of us missionaries and our local communities will intensify our presence and work among the youth, and we will cultivate Vincentian youth groups and young volunteers.*

2.3. *For the year 1999 and beyond, each one of our local communities of the Congregation will study the possibility of involving itself with other members of the Vincentian Family in a special project for the development of the poor.*

2.4. *The popular mission teams of each province or group of provinces will discuss ways to make possible and effective the participation of the members of the various groups of our Vincentian Family in our common missionary projects. They will carefully study the particulars of incorporation of the members of the groups (time period, social security, work possibilities for the future) and provide for their adequate formation.*

2.5. *For the year 1999 and beyond, each Visitor or Conference of Visitors will promote a significant project for the advancement of the poor with the participation of other members of the Vincentian Family.*

2.6. *For the year 1999 and beyond, each Visitor or Conference of Visitors will create a Justice and Peace Commission. Members of other groups of the Vincentian Family can also be admitted to form part of this commission.*

2.7. *For the year 1999 and beyond, the Superior General and his council will promote on each one of the continents a specific project for the development of the poor with the participation of the other members of the Vincentian Family.*

2.8. *In the year 1999, to commemorate the Year of Charity, the International Center for Formation (CIF) will propose some methods that the Conference of Visitors can use to organize short courses on the theology of charity, on all the continents and with special invitations to all the members of the Vincentian Family.*

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission can assume each one of these obligations?**

**3. *To work in the formation of the members of the Vincentian Family.***

The Vincentian Family is multifaceted. St. Vincent himself perceived the plurality of situations and gave a plurality of responses. The Holy Spirit inspired different persons with the building up of diverse institutions at various moments in history. Each institute

(priests, consecrated men and women, laity), flowing out from the center of the Vincentian charism, has given its own unique response to the call of God in favor of the poor.

It is precisely at this time in history when lay people are assuming a pronounced presence in the life of the Church that we mention frequently St. Vincent as one of the saints who offered and continues to offer to the laity ways of Christian living and service to the poor.<sup>19</sup> The lay people of the Vincentian Family have every right to expect that we, the missionaries, assist and help them.<sup>20</sup> *"But for the laity to take up actively this noble purpose (to see that human and Christian values are firmly acknowledged and rightly esteemed)..., it is not enough to exhort them. They must be offered a proper formation of a social conscience, especially in the Church's social teaching, which contains principles of reflection, criteria for judging and practical directives."*<sup>21</sup>

*3.1. Each one of the missionaries will be available and will respond quickly to collaborate in the formation and spiritual animation of the members and groups of the Vincentian Family.*

*3.2. In the coming years, each province and each local community will make the strong effort to organize groups of Vincentian laity where they do not exist; they will revitalize those groups that are weak; and animate and accompany those that are active and alive.*

*3.3. We will all work to increase the members of the Congregation and of the groups of the Vincentian Family.*

*3.4. Each province or group of provinces will establish a formation team for the members of the Vincentian Family. These teams will be entrusted with the mission to: design the elements of a common formation for the various members of the Vincentian Family in the country or region (history, common spirituality, appreciation for the proper charism of each group); encourage gatherings to deepen our Vincentian spirituality and the sense of belonging to the same family; foster the exchange of evangelization experiences and service to the poor.*

*3.5. We will open to all members of the Vincentian Family the formation programs that are already in existence for us: CLAPVI courses, gatherings of MEGVIS, Vincentian Weeks, CIF.*

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<sup>19</sup> "Every activity, every situation, every precise responsibility \_ as, for example, skill and solidarity in work, love and dedication in the family and the education of children, service to society and public life and the promotion of truth in the area of culture \_ are the occasions ordained by Providence for a `continuous exercise of faith, hope and charity'" (*Christifideles Laici*, 59; cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. General Council of the Congregation of the Mission. "Our response with regard to the laity. Reflection theme for the C.M." (1988), *Vincentiana* (1988) 239-259. These directives continue to be very valuable for today.

<sup>21</sup> Synod of Bishops 1987, Proposition 22; cf. also *Christifideles Laici*, 60. Cf. C.M. Statute 7.

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission can assume each one of these obligations?**

**4. *To provide for the formation of our members.***

The initial and ongoing formation is an expression and demand of fidelity to one's own ministry, to one's own vocation, to one's very self. *"It is love for Jesus and fidelity to oneself. But it is also an act of love for the People of God.... Indeed, an act of true and proper justice."*<sup>22</sup>

*4.1 Each missionary and local community will enthusiastically accept, as a means for our own formation, the invitations that the various groups of the Vincentian Family offer us to participate in their gatherings, courses and assemblies.*

*4.2. Each missionary and local community will make every effort in the next years to acquire a more profound knowledge of the theology of the laity, and to the study the history and spirituality of the various groups of the Vincentian Family. The Commissions on Ongoing Formation of each province should facilitate some concrete ways to achieve this.*

*4.3. Each province or group of provinces, by means of its Formation Committee, within the next two years, will revise its formation program in order to secure in all our candidates the following points:*

- \* Profound understanding of the Vincentian charism.*
- \* Initiation into work with the poor and in the love of charity toward the poor.*
- \* Development of a sense of community.*
- \* The learning experience of working as a team.*
  - \* Knowledge and experience of direct work with the groups of the Vincentian Family.*
- \* Systematic study of the history and spirituality of the groups of the Vincentian Family.*
- \* Competent preparation for the use of the modern mass media.*
- \* Acquisition of some fluency in at least two languages.*
- \* Quality theological formation.*
  - \* Substantial awareness of the social doctrine of the Church.*

*4.4. In the coming years, each province or group of provinces, through its Formation Committee, will attempt to find the ways to incorporate the active*

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<sup>22</sup> *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 70.

*participation of some members of the Vincentian Family in the formation of our candidates.*

*4.5. In the coming years, the Conference of Visitors will study the most effective ways to move forward in the interprovincial collaboration for the formation of our candidates.*

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission can assume each one of these obligations?**

**5. *To collaborate jointly in the international missions.***

*"Today, as never before the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations. I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians, and the missionaries and the young churches in particular, respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time."<sup>23</sup> All of us are invited to contribute to the preparation of the new Christian springtime which will be revealed by the Great Jubilee, being docile to the action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup>*

*5.1. Each missionary will develop personal and communal attitudes of availability that will make possible the care of the current international missions and the openness to any other new missions to which we may be called by the Superior General.*

*5.2. Each one of the Provinces should promote, willingly, the participation of its missionaries in the international commitments, and revise its missionary obligations in the light of Constitution 16 and Statute 5, and accept the challenges of new cultures.*

*5.3. The missionaries and provinces should encourage the sharing of goods, by means of the International Fund for the Missions.*

*5.4. The Superior General should continue to foster the international missionary dimension of the Congregation in the coming years.*

*5.5. The Visitors responsible for the international missions should find ways to make the participation of the members of the various groups of the Vincentian Family in our international missionary projects possible and effective. They should study carefully the conditions of incorporation of the members of the*

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<sup>23</sup> Redemptoris Missio, 92.

<sup>24</sup> *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 18.

*groups (time frame, social security, work possibilities for the future) and assure them of an adequate formation.*

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission can assume each one of these obligations?**

**6. *To make use of the new means of communication for the service of the mission.***

In our century, influenced by the mass media, the first proclamation, catechetics and the subsequent deepening of the faith cannot do without these means. Put at the service of the gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the Word of God is heard, enabling the Good News to reach millions of people. ... in them the Church finds a modern and effective version of the "pulpit" ....<sup>25</sup> In order to be faithful to the mission that the Congregation of the Mission has received, it has to use in a competent and effective way the modern mass media.

*6.1. Each missionary and each one of our local communities will take a personal interest in receiving the publications of the various groups of the Vincentian Family of the region or province, and we will offer them our publications.*

*6.2. Each one of the provinces or group of provinces shall assure that all the houses of formation have access to the modern mass media.*

*6.3. The Conferences of Visitors shall study the steps they must take to realize in each one of the countries or regions some common publication of the various groups of the Vincentian Family.*

*6.4. The General Council and each one of the provinces should create a continual flow of information sustained by means of modern communication such as the Internet.*

**Do you believe that the Congregation of the Mission can assume each one of these obligations?**

## **Conclusion**

At the threshold of the new millennium, our commitments grow from our pledge to try to understand deeply the evangelical maxims and to make them real in our lives.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Evangelii Nuntiandi, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Constitution 49.

As we gather together our commitments, we direct our sight toward Mary. She occupies a very special place in the spiritual experience of the Vincentian Family:

\* Contemplating Mary, in the mystery of the incarnation, we strive like her to be open to the transforming power of the Spirit, so that it may form in us the image of Jesus Christ and so that we can always fulfill the will of God in our lives.

\* With Mary, missionary and pilgrim, we will place ourselves promptly on the road to the new millennium to bear the message of the gospel of charity to the new "areopagi."

\* With Mary, with her Magnificat, we join in a song of thanksgiving to the God of history, because God has given us the grace to discover ourselves as the Vincentian Family and to enable us as Mary to renew our charism of following Jesus Christ, the Evangelizer of the poor.

**CONGREGATIO  
PRO INSTITUTIS VITAE CONSECRATAE  
ET SOCIETATIBUS VITAE APOSTOLICAE**

Prot. n. P. 53-1/98

**D E C R E E**

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission requests of the Apostolic See approval of the new Statutes of the Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception, whose purpose and first Statutes were approved and confirmed by His Holiness Saint Pius X on July 8, 1909.

The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, having attentively examined the matter, by means of this present Decree, *approves and confirms* the above mentioned new Statutes, which correspond to the text kept in its archives.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Vatican, February 19, 1998.

Eduardo Cardinal Martínez Somalo  
Prefect

+ Piergiorgio Silvano Nesti, C.P.  
Secretary

## **Proposed New Statutes**

# **Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception**

*(Association of the Miraculous Medal)*

Most Holy Father,

Robert P. Maloney, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity humbly sets forth the following:

The pious Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception, popularly known as the *Association of the Miraculous Medal*, whose purpose and statutes were approved and confirmed by His Holiness St. Pius X on July 8, 1909 (and then later revised and approved by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on September 8, 1990), has been established in many dioceses. The purpose and statutes of this Association, which are now set forth for approval, are as follows:

### **Article 1. Origin of the Devotion**

The Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Virgin stands as a living and constant reminder of the apparition of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in 1830, whose feast is celebrated annually on November 27. In this apparition, the Virgin gave a model of the medal, which quickly spread throughout the world. It was called by the people "miraculous" because of the many remarkable favors which God daily performed through its instrumentality.

### **Article 2. Purpose of the Association**

This Association has the purpose of recalling Mary conceived without sin; and also the sanctification of its members, integral formation in the Christian life, and the apostolate of charity especially to those most abandoned. Mary's Holy Medal, both by the symbolism which it shows and by the power it enjoys, offers both a model and assistance for those purposes.

### **Article 3. Leadership**

## **§1. The Director General**

This Association is under the authority of one Director General, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity (AAS, I [1909], 669-671).

## **§2. The National Director, or President**

A National Director, or President, is appointed by the Director General for a territory he designates.

## **§3. The Diocesan Advisor**

A Diocesan Advisor proposed by the National Director is appointed by a diocesan bishop to animate the Association in his particular church and works under the authority of the National Director.

## **Article 4. Membership**

### **§1. General Members**

All the faithful can become general members of this Association and share in its privileges. They are general members who wear the Holy Medal which has been blessed by a priest. It is fitting that they wear the medal around the neck. It is desirable that they receive a medal blessed by a priest, and that it be conferred either by a priest or by a delegated lay person according to the rite which has been approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship. However, this rite, together with the conferral of the medal, is not required for a person to become a member of the Association.

### **§2. Particular Members**

Particular members are those who have been registered in the records of the Association. The criteria for membership are determined by the particular statutes of the Association.

## **Article 5. Particular Statutes**

Particular Statutes of the Association are proposed by the National Director and approved by the Director General.

#### **Article 6. Indulgences**

Members of the Association of the Holy Medal of the Immaculate Conception enjoy the indulgences granted in perpetuity according to the rescript of the Sacred Penitentiary given on October 27, 1995.

1. On the day of investiture,
2. on the feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal,
3. on the feast of the Queenship of Mary,
4. on the feast of St. Catherine Labouré,
5. on the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, and
6. on the anniversary of the establishment of the Association.

#### **Article 7. Liturgical Feast Day**

The principal feast of the Association is November 27, on which the apparition of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal is recalled.

#### **Article 8. Closing Exhortation**

The members, remembering that Mary, *"taken up to heaven... did not lay aside her task in the plan of salvation, but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation"* (*Lumen Gentium*, 62), should very frequently pray the words which appear on the medal, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you." Let them keep in mind, however, *"that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to recognize the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love towards our mother and to the imitation of her virtues"* (*Lumen Gentium*, 67).

Respectfully submitted,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General of  
the Congregation of the Mission and of  
the Company of the Daughters of Charity

February 11, 1998

**HOUSES & INCORPORATED MEMBERS by PROVINCE - 1997**

Province	Houses	Bishops	Priests	Permanent Deacons	Brothers	Students with Vows	TOTAL
<b>General Curia</b>	6		7				7
<b>AFRICA</b>							
Congo (Dem. Rep.)	6		33		1	3	37
Ethiopia	4	1	26		1	2	30
Madagascar	8	1	68		4	5	78
Mozambique	7	1	14		2	2	19
St. Justin de Jacobis	6		31		1		32
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>							
Mexico	21		81		3	8	92
Eastern (USA)	23		190		12	9	211
Midwest (USA)	17		139		18		157
New England (USA)	8		33		4		37
Southern (USA)	5		32		1		33
West (USA)	11		51	2	3		56
<b>CENTRAL &amp; SOUTH AMERICA</b>							
Argentina	9		46	1	1	1	49
Curitiba (Brazil)	9	3	63		3	1	70
Fortaleza (Brazil)	3		29			5	34
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)	9	4	74		8	3	89
Central America	11	5	43		4		52
Chile	6		23				23
Colombia	22	2	126		13	12	153
Costa Rica	4		21		3		24
Cuba	5		11				11
Ecuador	6		28			3	31
Peru	12	1	54		1		56
Puerto Rico	13		56		2		58
Venezuela	14		61		1	2	64
<b>ASIA</b>							
China	5	1	41		2		44
Northern India	9	1	59		4		64
Southern India	6		52		2	40	94
Indonesia	9		72				72
Orient	9	Pat	38		4	3	46
Philippines	13	1	69		5	7	82
<b>EUROPE</b>							
Austria	4		17		4		21
Belgium	3		10				10
Paris (France)	21		116	4*	9	1	130
Toulouse (France)	15		78		8	5	91
Germany	5		12		2	1	15
Hungary	3		15		1		16
Ireland	24		124		1		125
Naples (Italy)	14	1	56		3		60
Rome (Italy)	9	1	61	1	3		66
Turin (Italy)	14		95	1	5		101
Netherlands	6	1	69		4		74
Poland	31	3	255		5	6	269
Portugal	11	1	50		2	2	55
Slovakia	7		29		2		31
Slovenia	9	1	46		4	1	52
Barcelona (Spain)	10		53		2		55
Madrid (Spain)	19		149		18	2	169
Salamanca (Spain)	22		101		11		112
Zaragoza (Spain)	21		126	1	4	2	133
<b>OCEANIA</b>							

Australia	10		56		4	2	62
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>29 + Pat</b>	<b>3189</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>195</b>	128	3552



## ADMITTED MEMBERS & ASPIRANTS by PROVINCE - 1997

### ADMITTED MEMBERS

### ASPIRANTS

Voc. Grps.    Min. Sem.    Prep. Yr.

PROVINCE	P*	PD*	CP	CB	TOTAL	TP	TB	TP	TB	TP	TB	TOTAL
<b>AFRICA</b>												
Congo (Dem.Rep.)			19	2	21					5	3	8
Ethiopia			3		3			31				31
Madagascar			30	8	38					6		6
Mozambique			3		3	10	2	20				32
St. Justin de Jacobis			16		16			60				60
<b>NORTH AMERICA</b>												
Mexico			11	1	12			20	1			21
Eastern (USA)			1		1	18				2		20
Midwest (USA)			2		2							
New England (USA)	1				1							
Southern (USA)												
West (USA)		1	3		4					1		1
<b>CENTRAL &amp; SOUTH AMERICA</b>												
Argentina			5		5	12				6		18
Curitiba (Brazil)			18		18	192		22		6		220
Fortaleza (Brazil)			8		8					8	1	9
Rio de Janeiro (Brazil)			25		25	15	2	21		4	1	43
Central America			15	4	19	11		9	1			21
Chile			4	3	7	14	3					17
Colombia			28	1	29	150	5	40				195
Costa Rica			2		2	6	1					7
Cuba				1	1	2						2
Ecuador			12		12					6		6
Peru			4		4					11		11
Puerto Rico			9	1	10	80	1	27	1	17	1	127
Venezuela			2		2	10	3					13
<b>ASIA</b>												
China	1				1	4						4
Northern India			15		15			43				43
Southern India			9		9			45				45
Indonesia			67		67					1		1
Orient			4		4			23		6		29
Philippines			34		34					39		39
<b>EUROPE</b>												
Austria			1	1	2		1					1
Belgium												
Paris (France)			15	3	18					5		5
Toulouse (France)			1		1							
Germany			1		1							
Hungary			4		4			2	1			3
Ireland			10		10					9	1	10
Naples (Italy)			3		3	6						6
Rome (Italy)			1		1			2				2
Turin (Italy)			1		1	4						4
Netherlands			1		1							
Poland			36	5	41							
Portugal			6		6	72		9				81
Slovakia			24	2	26	4	1			3	1	9
Slovenia	1		2		3	1						1
Barcelona (Spain)			2		2	9						9
Madrid (Spain)			6		6			72				72
Salamanca (Spain)			3		3	1						1
Zaragoza (Spain)			2		2			2				2
<b>OCEANIA</b>												
Australia			10	1	11	4	1			1		6

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>478</b>	33	515	<b>625</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>136</b>	8	1241

P\* = Priests; PD\* = Permanent Deacons; CP = Candidates to the Priesthood; CP = Candidates to the Brotherhood

\* Priests or permanent deacons coming from a diocese or another Institute.

TP = Aspirants to the Priesthood; TB = Aspirants to the Brotherhood

### MINISTRIES - 1997

MINISTRY	PRIESTS	PERMANENT DEACONS	BROTHERS
1. Parish (popular) Missions to the faithful	128		1
2. Missionary parishes or districts	178		
3. Parishes	883	1	19
4. Pilgrimage sanctuaries	66		6
5. Seminaries and clerical formation	194		2
6. Formation of our own exclusively	168		9
7. Missions Ad Gentes	181	4	8
8. Daughters of Charity (Director, chaplain)	135		
9. Schools (primary, secondary, superior, professional)	228		16
10. Social Communications (publications, radio, television)	28		1
11. Special studies	77		1
12. Chaplains: military, immigrants, hospital, associations	196		6
13. Chaplains: Vincentian Lay Groups	36		1
14. Direct Service of the Poor	31		5
15. Manual work	6		58
16. Administration	140	1	10
17. Retired, ill, convalescing	329		37
18. Absence from the Congregation	102		3
19. Other	69	3	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3175</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>195</b>

# Apointments and Confirmations by the Superior General

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<b>DATE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>PROVINCE</b>
20/03/98	Francisco Sampedro	Visitor (2nd mandate)	Chile
20/03/98	Andrés Pato	Dir. Mirac. Medal Ass.	Spain
03/04/98	Yves Danjou	Director D.C. (1/6)	Lille
04/04/98	Girmay Abraha	Visitor (1/6)	Ethiopia
07/04/98	Saturnino Redondo	Director D.C. (1/6)	Argentina
09/04/98	Alberto Vernaschi	Director D.C. (1/6)	Sienna

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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*

## **Service to the Elderly and Abandoned (Matola, Mozambique)**

<b>Participants</b>	Four branches of the Vincentian Family Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul St. Vincent de Paul Society Priests of the Congregation of the Mission Marian Youth
<b>Place</b>	A poor area of the parish : "Nossa Senhora do Amparo" de Matola (Mozambique)
<b>Social Context</b>	A civil war of 17 years has been the cause of great de-humanization and disintegration of families, forcing them to abandon the elderly and creating masses of street children.
<b>Objective</b>	The construction of a home for approximately 30 elderly in order to provide a place where they can be free of their misery and live in a human and dignified manner.
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Health and nursing care</li><li>- Christian education</li><li>- Productive activities: raising chickens, vegetable garden, etc.</li><li>- Kitchen help</li><li>- Recreational activities with the elderly</li><li>- Home visits in the area</li></ul>
<b>Personnel</b>	Available: two volunteers, two Daughters of Charity, one Priest of the Mission as well as Seminarians and the Marian Youth of Matola
<b>Administrative Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- One Daughter of Charity</li><li>- Two members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society</li></ul>
<b>Accreditation by authorities</b>	The project has already been recognized by the City Council of the city of Matola, by the Archdiocese of Maputo, as well as by the parish council at "Nossa Senhora do Amparo."

**Problems**

Problems may arise if members of the St. Vincent de Paul society or of the Marian Youth belong to other cultural organizations (witchcraft), or have social problems (dysfunctional families), or economic problems (lack of resources). It is first of all necessary to have a Vincentian spirit.

**Plan of action**

Because the Daughters of Charity and the Priests of the Mission are present, we think that the realization of the project is assured.

**Financing**

- The cost of the project is estimated to be \$60,000.00 (\$ USA)
- The St. Vincent de Paul Society of Matola has given a certain amount of money.
- A commitment of \$4,000.00 has been made by
- The St. Vincent de Paul Society in Ireland through Mr. Gerry Martin.
- The four branches of Matola are proposing to continue to look for other organizations to help finance this project.

# **Payatas Urban Poor Development (Philippines)**

**Participants** Three Vincentian priests  
Three Daughters of Charity Society of St. Vincent de Paul  
(Payatas Conference)

**Place** Payatas B, Quezon City, Metro Manila,  
Philippines

**Social context** Manila became a metropolitan area in 1975 when it merged with 13 suburban towns and three other cities. Among these three cities, Pasay, Kalookan and Quezon, it is the latter which is considered the largest, as it covers about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the entire metropolis, with approximately two million of the country's 69 million inhabitants.

Part of the area of Quezon City is Payatas, which is situated on the North with an area of 3,019 hectares and a population of 290,700 (1993). The population continues to accelerate at an annual growth rate of 15% owing to the fact of continuous rapid urbanization of people in search of greener pastures in the cities. A predominant number of these people have migrated from their calamity-stricken provinces where there are armed conflicts. Rural poverty due to lack of access to basic social services, as well as a high rate of unemployment has also given rise to migration to the cities.

The Barangay Payatas is further subdivided into A and B. About 20% of the population of Payatas lives in a fully developed area of 703 hectares, while the remaining 80% occupy an area of 172 hectares. The area has become the subject of great controversy because it has been converted to a gathering place for those migrating to the city, and has taken on the appearance of a squatter colony. In addition, Payatas B has a 15-hectare open pit dumpsite. This dump is located at the heart of the barangay and, despite high risks to health and life, provides livelihood opportunities for most of the residents.

**Target group**

There are an estimated 7,000 families now living in this fast growing squatter colony. Approximately 4,000 of those families rely on the dump for their daily sustenance. Oppressive poverty, lack of skills and education make it difficult, if not impossible to qualify for jobs. Because of this, scavenging, however haphazard and undignified it may be, has become an occupation of last resort.

The scavengers are an important part of the workforce. They not only supply the recycling businesses with doorstep-delivery of cheap recyclable goods, but they contribute to the Philippine economy, which is highly dependent on expensive imports, by offering another source of raw materials which can be used in production.

Despite their work and the contribution they make to the common good, the scavengers remain the poorest and lowliest members of society. They are undercompensated; they receive no social benefits, and are stigmatized as parasites of the dumpsite.

**Goals/Objectives**

*Goal:* to establish integrated community based

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*Objectives:* To establish organizations among the lowest 20% of the Payatas urban poor. The organizations will focus on harnessing the people's learning, knowledge, and skills to help them actively participate and lobby for issues and policies that directly affect them.

To mobilize social forces and resources within and outside the Payatas urban community to access basic social services.

To strengthen mechanisms and structures within poor urban communities to promote access to services, communication, self-reliance and sustainability.

## **Activities**

community mobilization for care and rehabilitation(handicapped children, PTB patients, working children, the elderly) community health or primary health care people's organization building scavengers' development program, promotion of self-help groups through savings and credit association and micro-enterprise development, sectoral advocacy and capability building for women and elderly persons

**Personnel**

The project fosters volunteer help in the local communities, relying on the good will and commitment of community members who have training as well as access to support services. The project also works with professional and technical experts who volunteer their services to the programs in Payatas.

**Management committee**

Vincentian Missionaries Social Development Foundation (VMSDFI)

**Problems**

There are several concomitant problems, however the most urgent are the instability of land ownership, inadequate housing, lack of access to basic social services, particularly health, education, etc.

**Follow-up**

Though there may be other efforts and strategies for social development, our focus is on building and strengthening people's organizations (PO's), with the view of formation of self-help groups.

**Financing***Funding Partners Country*

Misereor	Germany
Kinder Not Hilfe	Germany
Committee of	Germany
German Doctors Manos Unidas	Spain
Stichting Kinderpostzegels	Holland
Liliane Fonds	Holland
Caritas, Netherlands	Holland
Missione Bethlemme Immense	Switzerland

## **Rosalie Rendu Home (Shelter for Women) (Cologne, Germany)**

<b>Name and address of Project</b>	Foyer Rosalie Rendu Gocher Str. 45, D-50733 KOLN
<b>Sponsoring Group</b>	Daughters of Charity Merheimer Str. 217, D-50733 KOLN
<b>Planning Group</b>	- Daughters of Charity (Sr. Cypriana, Sr. Ute, and Sr. Irmina) - International Association of Charity (Mrs. Sturm) - Diocesan Committee of Volunteers (Mrs. Bruder, Mrs. Schmitz) - Caritas of the city of Cologne (Mr. Hengefeld)
<b>Supervision</b>	- Councillor of the organization : Mr. Ansgar Munsterjohan, Cologne
<b>Collaborative Partners</b> (Cologne) (Cologne) Cologne (Freiburg) (Cologne)	- Daughters of Charity - Association of Diocesan Volunteers - Caritas, diocesan group of the city of - Confraternities of Charity in Germany - Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Germany - Vincentian priests (Cologne) - Parishes in the city of Cologne
<b>Team</b>	Three Daughters of Charity work closely with the volunteers, a certain number of whom, they themselves have recruited and formed.
<b>Social Context</b>	Cologne, a city of about a million inhabitants, is witnessing, like all large cities of Europe, a growing number of homeless women. The causes of this are

numerous: unemployment, divorce, drug abuse, alcoholism, violence. Nowadays, the problem of homeless women is becoming more and more of a concern in the area of social work.

**Target Group** Homeless women, degraded and disadvantaged, who are living in situations void of human dignity, who are threatened in their very existence, and who have no other means of assistance.

**Activities** In a small community of three Daughters of Charity, located in the center of the city of Cologne, not far from the Provincial House, the following services are offered, in collaboration with other partners in the project:

- information about available assistance provided by the team
- available for the homeless women are:
  - 7 bedrooms for the women in good health
  - 3 bedrooms with 4 beds for the sick
- availability of emergency hospitalization in the former hospital of the Daughters of Charity, which is located near the shelter
- availability of Social Service of the Association of Catholic Men and Caritas to assist with financial problems
- assistance by professionals and institutions for health needs, social and family problems and drug addiction
- assisting in finding housing and employment
- spiritual care
- possibility of employment in a sewing shop which is run by the Association of Catholic Women

**Finances**

*Expenses*

- renovation of a house with 30 bedrooms
- sisters' salaries

*Revenue*

- contributions by the homeless women themselves

- money saved through the work of volunteers
- grants from public institutions
- renting of one part of the house from the Association of Catholic Women
- donations

## **Service to Terminal Aids Patients (Madrid, "Our Lady of Amparo," Spain)**

**Participants** St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Daughters of Charity  
Congregation of the Mission  
Franciscans  
Third Order Franciscans  
the laity in various parishes

**Place** Casa "Nuestra Señora del Amparo"  
C/San Pedro, no.3, planta 4a - MADRID  
The national and provincial headquarters of the confraternities of St. Vincent de Paul are located in this same place.

**Social Context** The ancient part of the city, with its old buildings is presently undergoing renovation. The population in this area is mainly retired people and those in the lower economic level. This area of the city does not receive social services for AIDS patients. Here, 36,990 people live on the threshold of poverty. They can be classified as follows:

- extreme poverty	2,930
- serious poverty	4,810
- moderate poverty	20,000
- financial instability	9,250

The mean income per person is 28,170 pesetas. The unemployment rate is 63.5%. The rate of drug and alcohol abuse is 1.8%

This area is near the Atocha train station. It is an area which is high in drug activity and prostitution. In our work, the AIDS victims find themselves in distressing situations and abandonment because of the marginalization they suffer from their illness. They suffer rejection because they live in a world of drugs, homosexuality, and prison. These sick people have no financial resources and cannot find

work because of their illness and the social rejection they suffer from it. Many of them have no family or social support. The existing resources for the AIDS victims are generally insufficient, because their needs are so great.

**Target Group** AIDS patients

**Objectives**

*General Objective*

To offer to terminal AIDS patients not eligible for other forms of assistance, a place of welcome where they can receive attention, affection and friendship. This is a means of evangelization by gift, witness and word, endeavoring to render them the respect and dignity they deserve as human persons.

*Specific Objectives*

1. To improve the quality of life of the residents by obtaining:
  - a physical environment appropriate for their needs, nutritional, health, hygiene, social, spiritual, etc.
  - a place attentive to psycho-social needs, where through personal relationships, activities, occupations, and work they can develop a sense of hope toward life.
2. To offer support to the resident with regard to health, psychological, social, and legal concerns.
3. To foster autonomy of the residents through an individualized plan of care.

**Activities**

**Board of Directors**

Admission of residents, establishment of criteria, norms and approvals, finance and administration.

**Director**

Functions include :

- to be the spokesperson for the project
- to coordinate activities

- to animate and strengthen the team and the volunteers
- to plan the meetings and evaluate the project
- to oversee the internal administration of the project
- to maintain an objective attitude toward the residents
- to discipline when necessary
- to coordinate work and vacation time
- to organize educational programs for the team and volunteers

### **Supervisors and support staff**

- to work closely with each resident and be accountable for implementing their individual plan of care
- to foster quality of life
- to be both guardian and friend to the residents
- to coordinate information about each resident
- to be responsible in one area of the project for the recruitment of sufficient volunteers, for organizing the work, and overseeing the accomplishment of the objectives in each area of the project

### **Volunteers**

Responsibilities :

- to accompany and support the residents
- to carry out specific duties in the various sectors
- to supervise various activities as well as household needs and needs of the residents

### **Work domains**

These include major and minor domains necessary for the proper functioning of the project

*a) Household domain*

*Objective*

To assure the daily good functioning of the house

*Methods*

To maintain the cleanliness of the premises. To plan menus for the daily meals. To manage supplies. To organize laundry service.

*b) Health domain*

*Objective*

To carry out a consistent medical and pharmacological regime

*Methods*

To prepare a first aid kit and keep it up to date.

To provide continuing education to the personnel working with the sick. To maintain good relations with the hospital and the care centers.

*c) Social welfare domain*

*Objective*

To facilitate the process to obtain the welfare benefits to which the patients have a right

*Methods*

To carry out the process to obtain welfare benefits.

To help the residents keep their paper work up to date

To settle legal problems

To maintain relations with the various social welfare institutions (INEM, INSERSO, etc.)

To create and keep up to date a resource file which the residents can use to look for work and other benefits

*d) Relationship domain*

*Objective*

To encourage among the residents a spirit of conviviality both within the house and with family and friends

*Methods*

To promote common activities (trips, outings, etc.)

To encourage good relationships among the residents.

To be aware of the needs of residents who are more motional

To promote contact with family and friends.

### **Administrative Committee**

Confraternity of "Nuestra Señora del Amparo":

President, Vice President, 2 members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, 1 treasurer, 5 volunteers, 2 Daughters of Charity, 1 Vincentian priest, 2 members of the laity.

### **Personnel**

A team composed of one Director, 4 supervisors/support staff, volunteers, members of the Confraternities, Daughters of Charity, Vincentian priests, one Franciscan and members of other institutions.

A professional team composed of one lawyer, one doctor, nurses, one psychologist, one social worker, one sociologist

### **Problems**

*With regard to the young AIDS patients*

The young are suffering physically and psychologically, maltreated by society, abandoned by their families. Some have been in prison, they have lost confidence in everyone and everything. They have no religious foundation on which they can rely.

No one has helped or respected them. These are young people who have had no structure. The slightest limitation that is imposed on them causes them great difficulty. Because of structure, the project itself can be very difficult for them.

*With regard to finances*

In this area we have difficulties because we depend on grants, donations, and the small contributions of the residents.

*With regard to volunteers*

Here we also come up against some difficulties which are related to a lack of responsibility and lack of availability of volunteers because of their own jobs.

## **Plan of action**

The program offered to the young AIDS patients enables them to regain confidence in society and in themselves (self-esteem, sense of their own dignity).

Reintegration is difficult for them on all levels. We share our faith by word and witness. Some of them have returned to the practice of their religion and others are still in the discernment process. We respect their dignity, their freedom, their own development, their slowness along the spiritual path.

On the financial level, we are explaining projects more in depth in order to obtain subsidies and grants.

Observing the work of the volunteers leads us to the conclusion that while placing confidence in them, we must continually remind them of their motivations and responsibilities. We also stress their Vincentian and social formation, as well as their skill development.

## **Financing**

Subsidy from the city

Subsidy from Social Services and the "Community of Madrid"

Donations from the members of the Confraternity

Donations from other individuals and groups

Contributions from the residents: 75% of their income

**Accreditation from civil  
and religious authorities**

The Confraternity of St. Vincent de Paul was recognized under public services April 23, 1972. The House "Nuestra Señora del Amparo" was recognized May 15, 1994 by the Church, independent from the city of Madrid and Social Services.

**Home for the Terminally Ill  
"Albergue La Esperanza"  
(Mexico City, Mexico)**

<b>Participants</b>	Priests of the Congregation of the Mission Daughters of Charity Vincentian Marian Youth Vincentian Volunteers - AIC St. Vincent de Paul Society Association of the Miraculous Medal
<b>Place</b>	MEXICO : Mexico City (Federal District) Address : Manuel Acuña, 43 <sup>1</sup> Col Palmitas. Delegació Iztapalapa <sup>2</sup> C.P. 096670
<b>Social Context</b>	Mexico City has a great number of terminally ill who must leave the hospital quickly because of a shortage of beds. They are sent to their homes where all too often they are rejected by their families and by society in general because of the great economic burden they represent. Sometimes they are rejected because of a total misunderstanding of their illness. Such is the case with diabetes, cancer, AIDS, leukemia. The fact is that these sick people are left alone with no one to help them.
<b>Target Group</b>	- terminally ill who have been abandoned and are in extreme poverty - family members who are asked to participate in the care and well-being of the sick person
<b>Objective</b>	To offer medical assistance, shelter, spiritual care, mental health counselling, and social assistance to persons who, because of their socio-economic situations or other problems of disability or illness, find themselves unable to care for themselves or provide for their needs. The criterion for admission is to be in the terminal phase of an illness. There is no discrimination of age or gender. To make families aware of their own responsibilities, to support them, and enable them to care for their sick member.

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<sup>1</sup> Very populated, marginalized area of extreme poverty

<sup>2</sup> East of Mexico City

## Activities

- Development of an internal policy : handbook of organization of the home and care for the sick
- Evaluation of each case upon admission to the home : home visit, social work assessment of each patient who is admitted, medical service, initiation of an individual program of activities, periodic evaluation of the program according to outcomes
- A complete follow-up of the persons in the home, including assistance with legal affairs, transfers for other services and activities which are needed, as well as assistance offered at time of death
- The Home also functions as a "day hospital" for the sick who are not hospitalized. Their care and activities are organized by an interdisciplinary group of volunteers and paid personnel who work at the Home.
- Family members receive education about the most effective ways to care for the sick person, taking into account their own state of health and their social condition.

## Administration

*"Patronato"*<sup>3</sup>: This refers to the upper administrative level of the Home. It is composed of representatives of the Vincentian Family nationwide in Mexico. It functions to supervise and oversee the program, to seek sources of financial support, to communicate with other organizations, to ensure budget control, to look for competent personnel, to provide ongoing training for the paid staff, as well as for the volunteers.

*General management*: This function is control, coordination, supervision, evaluation of programmed activities of the Home. It is the voice of the "Patronato," and the link between the "Patronato" and the Home.

*Administration committee*: Vincentian Family in Mexico The committee is composed of delegates from the different branches:

- Congregation of the Mission
- Company of the Daughters of Charity
- Vincentian Volunteers - AIC Mexico
- Vincentian Marian Youth
- Association of the Miraculous Medal

## Personnel

*Volunteers*:

The work is carried out by lay volunteer groups in each of the branches of the Vincentian Family, by a group of Daughters of Charity, and by Priests of the Mission. All areas of activity are carried out by young professionals who offer their social services at the Home.

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<sup>3</sup> Patronato : group of people who give financial support

*Paid personnel:*

- *General Management.* Functions: to plan the budget, supervise, coordinate, to channel and record the resources of the institution, to observe statistical trends to evaluate and make decisions; facilitate the procedures for admission in coordination with General Management, the social worker, the psychologist and the medical personnel. The Administration, along with the "Patronato" and General Management, takes part in the choice of personnel. Outside the Home, they collaborate with public officials and private institutions.

- *Medical and nursing personnel.* Social worker. Psychologist. Administrative interns.

**Problems**

**Financial**

- a) Lack of resources to purchase a building in this city.
- b) Mr. José Mata had pledged to finance the cost of construction of the Home in this city. The steps to obtain suitable property were drawn out and during that time, Mr. Mata died. His heirs have not assumed the commitment to finance the construction and have limited the donation to 10,000 Mexican pesos.
- c) Through the intervention of Caritas of the Archdiocese of Mexico City, we had the promise of the operations of the house being paid for, but this has not been possible.

**Organizational**

Several developments have come about and have influenced the organization of the project.

- a) The frequent change in the national representatives of the different branches of the Vincentian Family.
- b) The meetings for the "Patronato" have to be frequent (monthly) because the project is in the beginning stages.
- c) Distance and work of the national representatives has not allowed the development of relationship with the sick. They have relied on the presence of the Vincentian Family in the city.

**Plan of action**

The "Patronato" is conscious of the challenge of undertaking a common project with the Vincentian Family and of committing itself to be responsible for the work, to accomplish all the objectives and to adapt itself to its needs and demands.

The members of the "Patronato" must be vigilant to make sure the work does not lose the Vincentian spirit.

The Committee of Private Assistance, which regulates the activity of institutions, will continue supervision of this project.

## **Financing**

Sources:

- International donations (the project has been presented to several international organizations);
- National donations (private enterprises and certain NGO's)
- Government donations through contractual agreements (example: DIF<sup>4</sup> to obtain food for the home)
- Charity bazaars, lotteries, bingo
- Gifts in kind and things made by groups of volunteers. Other various contributions, collections, etc.

## **Accreditation by authorities**      *Civil:*

- The Committee of Private Assistance
- The Secretary of Finances and Public Credit
- The Department of the Federal District
- The Political Delegation of Iztapalapa
- "Nacional Monte de Piedad"

### *Religious:*

- The Episcopal Commission on Health Care
- National Caritas
- Caritas of the Archdiocese of Mexico City
- The Diocese of Nezahualc6yotl

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<sup>4</sup> DIF : Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (governmental organization)

# Health and Social Services and Vaccination Program (Genoa, Italy)

**Participants** International Association of Charity (AIC)  
Daughters of Charity  
Congregation of the Mission  
St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Daughters of Jesus of Nazareth (Vincentian Family)

It should be noted that the Vincentian Family together has some leverage with civil and Church authorities.

**Place** Genoa, Italy: Begato Quarter - C.P. 16159  
*First floor: Health and Social Services*  
Centro Diamante, via F. Maritano

The use of buildings belonging to "Istituto Case Popolari" (a public institution) were obtained for home care, social work, meetings. These locations are in an area furthest from the neighborhood, the areas which have the greatest needs.

## **Social context**

The location is in the outlying areas of the city, behind large housing projects. The great majority of families have low or non-existent incomes, and a high percentage of them are single parents or from broken families. In this neighborhood, the city's social services has allocated housing to a very diverse mixture of people, consequently there exists little, if any, sense of community.

The neighborhood is affected by a number of problems: unemployment, unrest among the young, alcoholism, drug addiction, difficulties with the law, problems with ex-convicts, and with people under house arrest.

An analysis of the situation by two parish priests of the area, along with a group of residents of the neighborhood, prioritized the needs:

- decentralized health and social services, or home care for the elderly
- young people in difficult situations
- ex-convicts

It was decided to work on the project in two stages:

First stage: decentralized health and social services (already exists)

Second Stage: Youth Center for young people in difficult situations (in the planning process)

<b>Situation</b>	<p><i>First Stage: Decentralized health and social services</i></p> <p>Public health and social services are located at a distance from the population they serve. The elderly and handicapped have great difficulty accessing them.</p>
<b>Target group</b>	<p>The elderly with health problems who are unable to care for themselves, people under house arrest who are unable to go out.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To give assistance and simple treatments to home-bound elderly and sick</li> <li>- To provide instruction in the area of self-management to those having difficulty in this area, through the use of a decentralized social service department.</li> <li>- To be a Christian and Vincentian witness in serving each person.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Service began October 1, 1997</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home care services and treatments (personal hygiene for the sick, giving injections, blood pressure checks, and other forms of nursing care);</li> <li>- Support for families where continuous assistance is necessary; contact with doctors;</li> <li>- Instructing and assisting people with their paperwork</li> <li>- Follow-up with the sick who are hospitalized</li> <li>- To have a car available to take people to their appointments; volunteers offer their services as drivers</li> <li>- Availability of social service services and instruction for the residents of the neighborhood</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">- Spiritual support</p>
<b>Personnel</b>	<p>The personnel are all volunteers. They are comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three Sisters who are nurses</li> <li>- One Sister who is a social worker</li> <li>- One group of volunteers from AIC was formed from volunteers of other city groups as a sign of solidarity (about 20)</li> <li>- the two groups of AIC who are the closest to the neighborhood, offer their support</li> <li>- One local group of the St. Vincent de Paul Society already in existence</li> <li>- One Priest of the Mission</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative Committee</b>	<p>- The administrative committee is in the process of being developed. We anticipate that it will be composed of representatives of the four branches of the Vincentian family, from the neighborhood, and priests from the two parishes who have an interest in this project.</p>

**Problems**

The places that the Center occupies at present are not exclusively for that use. It is necessary to find other places that can be used as decentralized parish centers as well, since the parish is at a distance.

**Plan of Action**

The first stage represents the beginning of a presence in this neighborhood. We hope to be able to develop another project located at the other end of the neighborhood with the primary objective to respond to the needs of young people in crisis.

**Genoa (Italy) :** Quartiere - C.P. 16159

*Second stage: center for the young in crisis*

centro Polivalente, via Bach 3

The following activities are anticipated:

- center for children: health promotion and education
- center for adolescents, help with school work, sports
- community work group for unemployed youth, and if possible, for women released from prison.

The center is large and it can also include:

- a social center for the elderly
- a social service center for ex-convicts or people under house arrest
- a rehabilitation service for alcoholics

**Financing**

For the implementation of the first stage, a partnership has already been established with certain associations, thanks to the availability of local resources.

For the day to day functioning, the higher expenses (medications and some recurrent expenses, such as heat, water, electricity, telephone) are covered by a contribution of the Vincentian Family: \$5,000.00.

For the implementation of the second stage of the project (acquisition of some buildings and grounds from the old church):

- local contributions (parish and city social services) already paid: \$59,000.00.
- foundation approved and a usage agreement was granted for 50 years - \$118,000.00.

The projects are going to be presented to the city and regional councils.

# The Moderator of Vincentian Movements

*Lauro Palú, C.M.*

*The initial inspiration for those of us who work as Moderators of the lay movements known today as Vincentian comes directly from St. Vincent and St. Louise.(1)* After beginning the Confraternities of Charity (we know there were many of these: of women, of men, and mixed), St. Vincent drew up their rule. The Missioners were supposed to establish new "Charities" where ever they preached a mission or undertook any other work. St. Vincent specifically formed St. Louise to be the first "moderator" or adviser of the Charities, as well as their animator and formator.

St. Vincent was a practical man. He always asked for lists of the names of the truly needy; he wanted to know the cost of items in every region; he would specify that meat should be cut into small pieces for the sick who were toothless; a thousand small details which revealed the intensity of his love for the poor. (It seems to me that in the richness of these practical details we can discern the influence of Vincent's collaborators, especially of St. Louise.) He was a man of faith, inspired by the Gospel, the person, the words, the actions, of Jesus Christ. The poor must be served with kindness, meekness, cordiality, patience, endearment, respect, devotion. He spoke of the poor as being sacraments of Christ: we must see Jesus Christ in the poor. He used to say that the poor are our lords and masters (to the Daughters of Charity, their *owners*). He often said the poor must be seen through the eyes of Jesus Christ, such was his regard for them. He said that in order to do the things of Christ we must put on his spirit, that the Congregation would be capable of all things if animated by the spirit of God; that we must act in conformity with the mind of Christ, etc. As a true prophet, St. Vincent *denounced* the evils the poor were subject to, proclaiming their dignity and God's plan to save them through Jesus Christ; and he achieved great changes in favor of the poor.

St. Vincent was an extraordinary organizer, attentive always to those details which would assure the proper functioning of his projects, as well as their continuity and development over long time periods. He based all on personal contact with the poor and his love for them, and in this way inspired his collaborators.

Fleeing from scheming clericalism, St. Vincent learned to count on the laity, whom he knew how to recruit, form, and then send out to the most needy, wherever they could be found, wherever they would hide. He knew especially how to entrust women with real social and ecclesiastical responsibilities which required special tact. Aware of the evangelical potency of the poor, he was able to awaken this talent in the ones he chose for service to the poor, so that they in turn could care for others both materially and spiritually, body and soul, individuals and families, in hospital and on returning to their homes, feeding them and providing them with needed agricultural implements. In this

corporal and spiritual aid, St. Vincent was certainly helped by the experience of the laity and especially of the Daughters of Charity. His evangelization was integral, reaching beyond simply announcing the Gospel and mere material assistance to become true human development. He used to tell the volunteers as well as the Daughters of Charity that by their goodness they were revealing the goodness of God (SV X, 924; IX, 241-242).

"Thus we see in St. Vincent the model adviser or Moderator a man who began with actual reality, the believer (priest) who sees Christ in the poor, who demands the utmost respect for the poor person, who never separates love of God from love of neighbor; the organizer who trusts completely the lay person, concretely, the woman; the man of practical talent who presents clearly the objectives and means for the confraternities, who seeks the integral development of a person, who communicates his own charism to all for the well-being of the poor. He teaches all this to St. Louise, his faithful, efficient collaborator, and to the Ladies of Charity, in his conferences and homilies." (Quevedo, Alvaro. Moderating the AIC. *CLAPVI* no. 59, 1988, p. 212)

### **Our Task: to Help the Vincentian Laity**

Statute 7 of the Congregation says: "Lay associations founded by St. Vincent and those which are inspired by his spirit should *be of special concern to our members, since they have the right to our presence and to our support. Although all members should be willing to undertake this work, it is necessary for some to be more skilled in it. It is important that this animation have a spiritual, ecclesial, social, and civic dimension.*"

Here we see two complementary realities: the *rights* of the laity, our obligations towards them. The statute contains two directives for us: *some of us should specialize as Moderators of lay movements, and all should offer their aid, giving a Vincentian orientation to their spiritual, ecclesial, social, and civic dimensions.*

In a study on the *role of Vincentian Moderators today* (*CLAPVI*, year XXII, #93, 1996, p. 324-336) Fr. Antonio Elduayen develops the dimensions of our guidance: *Religious*: spiritual life, sacraments, liturgy; *Ecclesial*: union with and participation in the life and organic plan of the church (diocese, parish, allied groups); *Vincentian*: vocation and spirit, a sense of Vincentian, belonging to the Vincentian Family; *Marian*: Mary, invoked under the title "Miraculous," as mother, model, guide, and protectress; *Missionary*: to serve the new evangelization both as object and method; *Social*: integrating theological, assistential, developmental, and liberating charity (its political dimension: structures), to make the Gospel effective; *Organizational*: general objectives and procedures of the association, following its statutes.

Turning our attention to the Marian Youth movements: when I prepared this paper for the members of the Council I realized there are certain actions to be avoided, and others to be cultivated in the hearts of youth. What we must avoid: paternalism, overly strict direction. We can be proud of our young people for their goodness, but we must not treat them, even though they captivate us, as trained pets who will dance when we want them to. What must be cultivated in our dealings with youth, those dimensions on which we must insist, are prayer, spiritual direction, proper values, vocational option, team work. These aspects are presented to the national associations in the text of the international statutes which the Superior General is sending to them, and are found in the "End" of the Association (Art. 9).

### **Autonomy of Vincentian lay movements**

Our relations with the *Daughters of Charity* are regulated by constitutional guide lines. Those of the Daughters say: "Since its origin, the Company has willed to be subject to the authority of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, the successor of St. Vincent De Paul. He has over the Company the double power, dominative and jurisdictional, recognized by the Church and by the Constitutions. The Daughters of Charity acknowledge and accept him as God's representative, the one who helps them maintain their characteristic spirit and to carry out their mission in the Church" (3.27). "The Director General is a priest of the Congregation of the Mission appointed directly by the Superior General *ad nutum* to be his permanent representative for the Company.... He sees to it that the life of the sisters and their apostolic work are always fulfilled in fidelity to their vocation" (3.28).

These two quotes tell us that in our guidance of others we must help them to live the true charism of the Church. This is true, for example, with regard to the *Society of St. Vincent De Paul*, founded by Frederick Ozanam in 1833, a private association of the faithful, led and governed by laymen and recognized by the Holy See. It has no juridical link with the Congregation of the Mission. Nevertheless, there has always been a history of cordial cooperation between the two.

The juridical relationships of the *various Marian groups* with the Congregation are of several types. However, the Superior General is their Director General, according to the statutes of each group, and he names their National Director.

The Superior General is also Director General of all *Miraculous Medal Associations*.

*The International Association of Charities*, which gathers into one immense organism all the national associations of volunteers (formerly the Ladies of Charity), is a public association of Christian men and women, governed by its own rule and statutes,

within the framework of Canons 298-320. St. Vincent founded the association in 1617. In 1971 Fr. James Richardson, Superior General, renounced his juridical authority over said association on the international level, although retaining his role on national and local levels. The Association has an ecclesiastical assistant who is, by Canon 317, § 1, appointed by the Holy See, after consulting the international directorate of the Association. In choosing this Assistant (cf. Rule #3) the AIC presents several names to the Holy See, with the approval of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission. The Assistants are chosen from among priests of the Congregation of the Mission. For the method of choosing Assistants on local, regional, and national levels, statutes must be consulted.

## **Role of the Moderator or Lay Movements**

Although some confreres specialize in guiding lay movements, all of us, as Statute 7 tells us, should be willing to undertake this work, so I offer the following to all members of the Congregation. A Moderator, or advisor, is someone who accompanies another, who sits beside someone else. (This is clearer in the romance languages, where derivation from the Latin "ad sedere" is obvious. Translator's note.) There are two kinds of advise: one directive, the other more liberating. (We follow Fr. Quevedo's methodological suggestions here.) The first characterization can appear negative, but it is didactic, because of the clear opposition between the methods of advising. It does not always happen that this model is outmoded with the passage of time. Presenting the deficiencies of a practice is a way of correcting things that are not working well. Here are some guidelines for revising our work methods in general.

**1. Directive moderator:** In a clerical Church the Moderator was "director" who knew everything, and the laity mere "minors," dependent on the priest for everything. It was a pyramid, with priests, religious, bishops, and the Pope occupying the summit. The priest was responsible for everything; the laity passive. The director directed. He knew everything. So he taught. This clericalism is open to severe criticism for the consequences of its paternalism which depersonalized the laity, who were obliged to listen, to obey, to follow orders, without dialogue, without participation, without personal responsibility. Only the director's opinion was listened to, and imposed, with no importance given to the experience of the group. Often there were no apparent problems, simply because assignments, results, methods, the entire process, were not evaluated.

With such a work plan passivity is inevitable. Conscience is not awakened, reasoning is absent, individualism grows, and the group is not enriched because nothing is ever shared.

**2. The non-directive moderator who liberates:** Contrary to the above, a different type of guidance is possible, the fruit of a different vision of Church. Nowadays, in the ecclesiology of Vatican II, we talk of the "People of God," where all

are equal, even though we occupy different places and fulfill different tasks, while serving our brothers and sisters. We can no longer regard the laity only as objects of our zeal, of our direction, of our authority. As responsible, as are we, for their own lives and for their response to God, the laity should contribute in a mature responsible way, their personal charisma, experience, talents, ideas, and capacity to love and serve. St. Vincent said it: the poor evangelize us, they are our masters, we must go to their school (and attend their classes!). We cannot spend our time just teaching, but must be formed with the laity in the process of transforming society and the world.

This kind of direction is said to be liberating, because by stimulating active participation of a person and forming him or her towards more participation, it frees up the transforming potential which exists in all of us. Through participation one is enabled to progress from a state of ingenuous conscience to a critical conscience which attempts to know reality as it is, with its positive values and deficiencies, with the ambiguities found in other people, and the limitations of everything that surrounds us. With all these efforts to learn the reality of persons and participating in the processes in which we are involved, with openness to dialogue, reflection, and co-responsibility, each member is helped to form a consciousness of his own dignity and worth, strengthening himself to transform reality, and make a contribution towards the well-being of all, especially of the most handicapped and abandoned. Thus we can see how this type of guidance is best for our fundamental option for the poor.

## **Unctions and qualities of a moderator**

**1. Functions and job, or mission, of the moderator:** The moderator of a Vincentian group must help its members live an experience of Church, to labor, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ for the poor, in favor of the most needy. This, in short, is the objective, style of life, and work of our Vincentian groups. The moderator, by his office, must help our groups to adopt a truly evangelical attitude towards the problems our poor face today. Based on the Gospel, on St. Vincent, and on the social teachings of the Church, the Moderator must see to it that these groups, inspired by our own charism, be formed and serve the poor apostolically. As moderator he must help a group grow by teaching them proper group procedures, which will also develop each individual member. His job, then, is to deal with the group as a unit and accompany them in their apostolic works.

Fr. Jaime Corera synthesizes the Vincentian spirituality which we transmit to the groups we work with thus: "In the spirituality or Christian spiritual vision proper to St. Vincent De Paul the lay person is called to live out his baptismal faith (his sanctity) by an active dedication to the corporal and spiritual redemption of the poor. This should be undertaken in union with others within an organized institution (confraternity,

association, or community) with a mode of action and a sensitivity which is simple, humble, and full of the charity of Christ himself" (*CLAPVI*, yr. XXII # 90-91, 1996, p. 54-63).

With necessary adaptations we can also apply to the Vincentian groups with whom we work the words of Claire Delva, ex-president of the AIC, and first organizer of the Volunteers of Charity on an international level, words she addressed to the Visitors in Bogota in 1983 and which indicate what the members of the AIC ask of us: "Be attentive to our efforts.

"Support and encourage us.

"Recognize our capabilities as responsible lay women.

"Accept the worth of our association on national and international levels, as well as our own identity and our autonomy among other organizations dedicated to charity and assistance. "Collaborate with us on all levels, laity and clerics cooperating in joint responsibility." To these words Claire Delva added, in the name of all the Volunteers of the world: "We also commit ourselves to all this" (Cf. Quevedo, *op. cit.* p. 219).

Quoting again from the proposed Statutes being drawn up by the Superior General, we read:

"In order to attain its objectives the Association puts at the disposition of its members all the means it judges convenient:

*a) it encourages the interiorization of the Word of God and celebrates it, valuing group prayer and the liturgy because Christ makes himself present in the word, in the Eucharist and in those who pray together;*

*b) it offers a catechetical formation process for maturing in faith \_ a process of catechumenal inspiration which has its stages, its objectives and its activities;*

*c) it makes known to the members what Holy Scripture and the Church say in regard to the Virgin;*

*d) it promotes the knowledge of St. Vincent, St. Louise, St. Catherine and other witnesses of the Church who lived the Gospel in giving themselves to charity;*

*e) it offers the members the possibility of serving the poor;*

*f) it promotes study sessions, a school for catechists, congresses, assemblies, publications and other instruments of pastoral and social communication (Art. 11).*

The place of the Moderator is, of course, wherever these formation activities take place, to animate them or to be part of the formation team. And rather than just "laying down conditions," he should work with the young people "to create the conditions." This is a concise description of the job and method of work of the Moderator.

**2. Qualities of a moderator:** We enjoy no monopoly on moderating Vincentian lay groups or Volunteers of Charity. But we are actually more consulted than others, and are frequently asked to help form new Moderators, be they sisters or laity. The qualities we should personally cultivate in our hearts to fulfill this task are the following:

a) We must be people of faith, well-disposed to communicate to others the zeal which consumes us.

b) To be Moderators we must be able to stimulate growth in individuals and groups, and not continually criticizing errors and minimal defects. We have to discover the good in each process, support indications of good will, prepare for the future with patience and prepare our tasks optimistically and courageously. It is not just a question of teaching the works of St. Vincent, but of communicating his spirit of transformation of life

c) In order to animate the laity who work with the poor and handicapped, we must know how to communicate a positive, joyful, and hopeful message that we are the bearers of God's love to the lost and abandoned. St. Vincent used to say: "We must proclaim that the Kingdom of God is for the poor. Do it like the women the Risen Lord sent to announce to the apostles his victory over death, sin, and all evil."

d) Inspired by St. Vincent, living his charism in an apostolic spirituality committed to the poor, we must labor as the Church asks, promoting justice in our own spirit of "simple, cordial, humble love, a love that takes risks, an inventive love" (Basic doc: AIC).

e) In order to help the laity to interpret the signs of the times in the light of Christ and the Gospel (not in the light of television!), we need the gift of discernment. We find through contact with the Word of God, read through the eyes of the poor, in the Bible, and in daily life.

f) A Moderator must cultivate good human relations, with fraternity, Christian friendship, united in loving and serving the Vincentian Family.

"In meetings between Moderators and lay Vincentians requests such as these are frequently heard: We lay Vincentians want Moderators with attitudes of service, friendship, accompaniment, sincerity, justice; who show enthusiasm, who stimulate us, who help us grow in responsibility, in Christian and Vincentian life, who make us feel more secure in being with Jesus as we serve our oppressed and abandoned brothers and sisters" (Quevedo: *op.cit.* p. 220).

Sometimes we may think that such a way of presenting a list of qualities does not take into account a personal reality: that all of us are not so gifted. Actually we cannot expect the Moderator to be a superman with no defects, and blessed with all the gifts of nature and grace. A generous good will is sufficient, plus untiring effort, the capacity to evaluate and change attitudes, courage to recognize our limitations and consequently to improve our participation, and above all good preparation of our activities and tasks.

### **Reality of lay help in the provinces**

The Preparatory Commission for the General Assembly of 1998 has synthesized the replies of the Provinces to the Superior General's questionnaire on the theme of the Assembly: *The worldwide Vincentian Family and the challenges of the mission in the third millennium*. Twenty-one Provinces said we must get to know one another, to coordinate, and to collaborate. Sixteen ask that it be made clear what it is that unites us as a Vincentian Family with Vincentian spirituality. Twelve desire help in the formation and animation of Vincentian family groups. Three want structures for coordination to be created. Four say we ought to offer mutual spiritual assistance.

As to unity and cooperation among the different branches of the Vincentian Family, the answers were not always clear. I had hoped, for example, for more cooperation *between ourselves and the Daughters of Charity*. But only five provinces indicated a high level of cooperation. In fifteen provinces a good level exists. For six, a satisfactory level (one Missioner is their Director, a few help with spiritual direction, retreats, and confessions). Ten provinces offer sporadic cooperation; none in two provinces, and in another some cooperation which does not amount to cooperation. One province cooperates but there is no common project. Another indicates the need for new forms of cooperation based on equality.

*Between the missioners and the AIC:* Good cooperation exists in six provinces. In nine provinces some missioners who are already counselors or Moderators of Volunteers, are interested. Seventeen provinces are commencing collaboration. And in eleven more there are no Volunteers; or if there are we do not assist them.

*The Congregation and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul:* In fourteen provinces one or more confreres participate as Moderators and active members of the Society and work in common projects. Nine have good relations on a general level and desire to increase collaboration. Sixteen have slight relations; five none at all. In one province the Society does not exist.

*Between Confreres and Marian Associations:* (Vincentian Marian Youth, the Marian Movement, Children of Mary, etc.) Good relations exist in ten provinces, where confreres are directors and animators. Six provinces have intermittent, insufficient relations with little enthusiasm. Four are beginning Marian Youth groups. In four others there are groups, but they are animated by the Daughters, not by us. Twenty-one provinces have no Marian Youth groups. However, in all provinces there are youth groups, but none with a distinct Vincentian character.

*Between Confreres and Miraculous Medal Associations:* Twenty-nine provinces have no Miraculous Medal Associations. In seventeen there is a devotional relationship (novenas, etc.). Some publish bulletins for their associates. Relations between confreres and Miraculous Medal Associations are almost always informal and anonymous. Some countries are the exception, where associations with definite objectives and organized structures exist.

*Between the Congregation and other groups of the extended Vincentian Family:* There is some contact and active collaboration in twenty-one provinces. Of these only two indicate a dynamic relationship. In the rest it comes down to occasional liturgical celebrations. Twenty-four report that, if there are Vincentian groups they barely maintain contact.

*Among the Vincentian Groups themselves:* If these have any mutual contact eleven provinces are not aware of it. Twenty-six report no coordination among groups, or that it is insufficient; just an occasional festive occasion. Five provinces are attempting to bring about some effective coordination. Three hold formation encounters for the groups.

Liturgical celebrations have been mentioned frequently. I think this refers to the day of prayer celebrated in September, 1996, coordinated by the four persons responsible for the international branches of the family, a clear sign that once started, a good thing keeps moving.

We must give an answer to the Lord and to our brothers and sisters of the family, as well as to all the poor, that we are disposed to do anything necessary to achieve unity and, as the Volunteers say, "Against poverty we work together!"

At the conclusion of a meeting in Guatemala among our Latin American Provinces, on the theme: St. Vincent and today's Laity, the priests and sisters present committed themselves as follows:

1. We recognize the need of a better systematic formation in order to know the different Vincentian Associations; this must begin in our seminaries and continue as ongoing formation.

2. To develop the proposals of *CLAPVI* (396) we need to undertake more seriously, responsibly, and humbly, our role as Moderators, always respecting the identity of each group.

3. United we support the integration of the Vincentian Family, evaluating the work accomplished by the movements. To accomplish this an organization must be set up in each country to program the works (*CLAPVI*, XXII, 1996 # 20).

1. I will use above all the word “assessor”, though in some countries this person is also called “counsellor,” “ecclesiastical assistant,” “animator,” etc. The person and the work of the assessor are described in various articles of confreres who work or had worked in this ministry.

Some references are: Berrade, Alfonso. “Asesoría de laicos,” in *CLAPVI*, vol. XXII, n. 93, 1996; pp. 312-323. Corera, Jaime. “El Asesor de los Movimientos Laicos Vicentinos,” in *CLAPVI*, vol. XXII, n. 90-91, 1996; pp. 54-63. Dell'Amore, Célio.

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In this presentation, I am following above all the ideas and proposals of Fr. Alvaro Quevedo.

## **Vincentian Bibliography**

**CARLO RICCARDI, C.M.**

*Spiritualità Vincenziana*  
*Contributo allo studio del Vincenzianismo*

Published by C.L.V. Edizioni Vincenziane, Rome, Italy (158 pages)

In this new work the author, who has studied and expounded on St. Vincent for a long time, offers us a synthesis of his reflection on Vincentian spirituality. The book, divided into five chapters, begins by specifying the fundamental inspiration, then it defines the Christocentric humanism of St. Vincent, and later speaks of the instruments with which he accomplished his projects and their relevance for today. Riccardi then gives the four principal characteristics of Vincentian spirituality and concludes by a reflection on the validity of the relevance of this spirituality. This book is sprinkled with many quotations and facts from the life of the saint. It was requested principally by the lay Vincentian associations who understand more and more the necessity of a better knowledge of the spirituality of their founder or inspiration in order to carry out successfully their charitable action.

**TIMOTEO MARQUINA, C.M.**

*José María Alcácer, C.M.*  
*Vida, Obra y Testimonios*

Published by La Milagrosa, Madrid, Spain, 1996 (301 pages)

This book retraces the life of the great Spanish musician, whose work has been described as "a classic of present-day religious music." He composed innumerable songs, Masses, organ pieces, etc. which were very successful in his own country and abroad. In the second part of the book, the author gives a description and makes an analysis of the entire musical work of Fr. Alcácer. As a Vincentian missionary, he was an authentic evangelizer through music put at the service of liturgical prayer. He also gave a remarkable witness of holiness in his life.

**LUIS BACÁICOA MARTICH, C.M.**

*Interpretaciones al órgano  
Sobre textos de San Vicente y Santa Luisa*

Published by La Milagrosa, Madrid, 1997 (177 pages)

These "interpretations at the organ" are in fact the author's meditations on the thoughts of St. Vincent and St. Louise. The author proposes for us a type of dialogue between the founders and himself, introducing us to his reflections which are the fruit of a long association with and contemplation on their works.