

To the members of the Vincentian Family (1)

My very dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

Recently Pope John Paul II encouraged those using new technology to "increase the Church's presence on the Internet as a means of proclaiming the Good News in what we call the 'Information Age'" (Message to Information Network of the Church in Latin America, March 3-6, 1998).

As we inaugurate this page, I want to urge the many members of our Vincentian Family to employ this means of communication well. Today sharing information is extremely important. It raises consciousness, as the bishops of Vatican II envisioned, about "the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of our contemporaries, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1). It is my firm hope that, as we exchange information and creative ideas within our family, we will be able to channel our energies more effectively in the service of the most needy and also to investigate the causes of poverty and formulate short- and long-range solutions for dealing with it.

During the weeks ahead, this page will begin to publish news bulletins about the General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission, whose theme is "The Worldwide Vincentian Family and the Challenges of the Mission in the Third Millennium." I have asked all our Vincentian provinces to establish an Internet connection so that they can tap into this information, and an e-mail connection so that they can be in contact with one another and with our General Curia in Rome. I hope that all the branches of our family can profit similarly from the information provided on this page as it grows and on the many other pages offered by Vincentian groups.

On June 20, 1647, St. Vincent cried out very spontaneously at a meeting of the General Council of the Daughters of Charity: "Oh, my God, how necessary it is to have great communication with one another. To share everything. There is nothing more necessary. That is what binds hearts together" (SV XIII, 641).

I can only respond to that: Amen! So may it be among us.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

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

(1) Message on the first page of the Internet site opened on the occasion of the General Assembly of 1998, 6 July 1998.